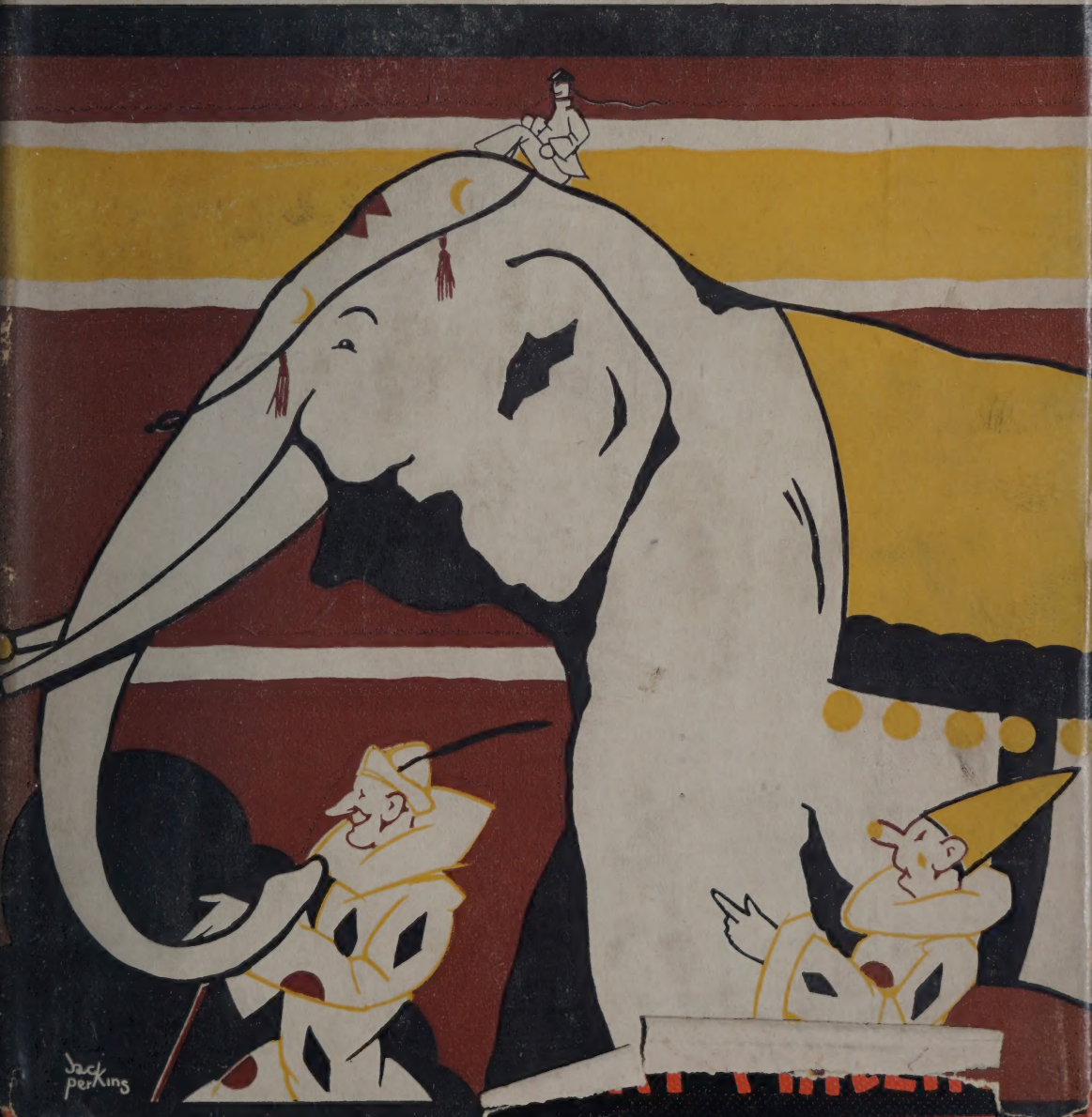
THE LIVELY ADVENTURES OF JOHNNY PING WING

ETHEL CALVERT PHILLIPS



THE LIVELY ADVENTURES OF JOHNNY PING WING

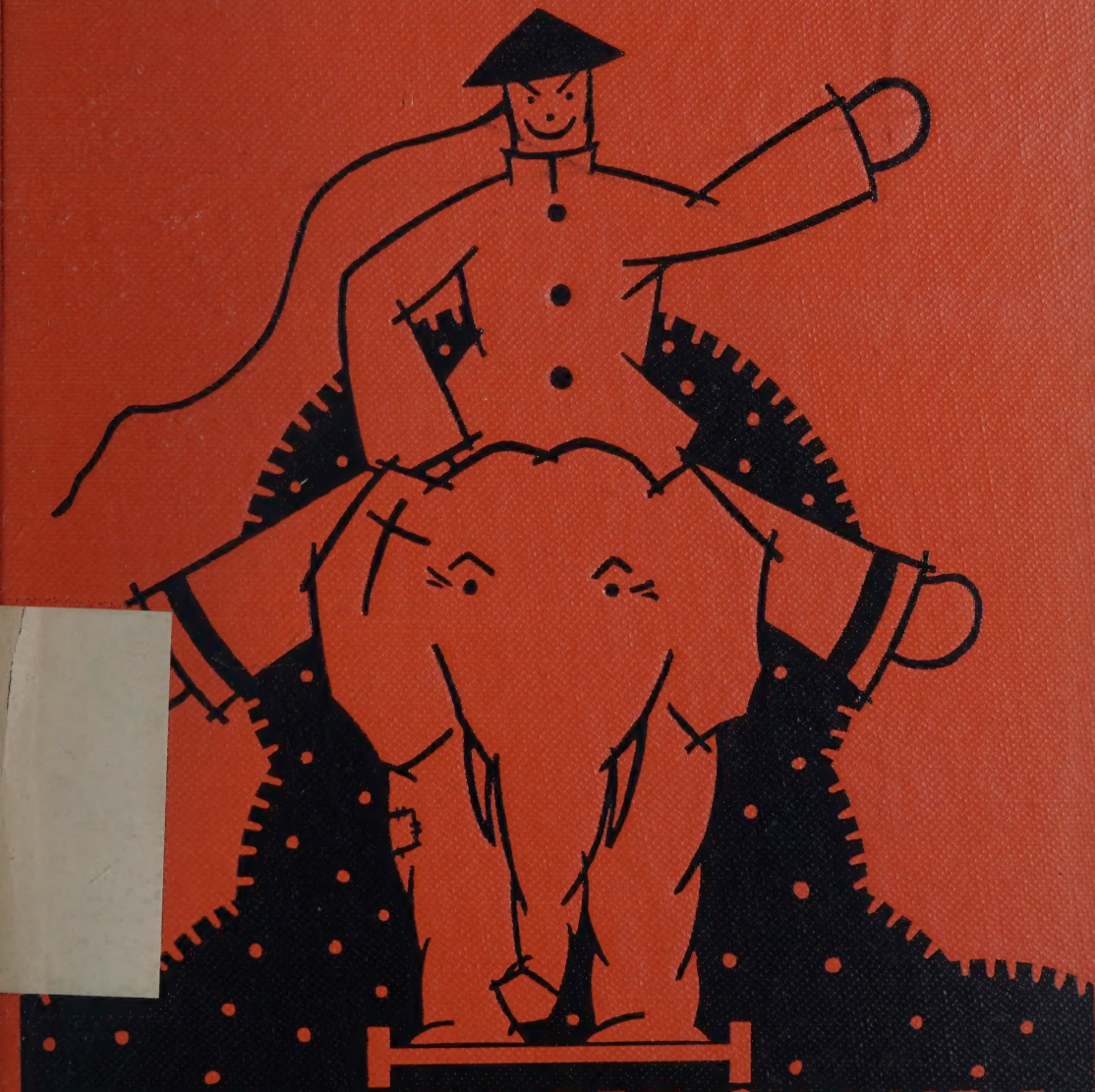
By Ethel Calvert Phillips

THIS is the story of Johnny Ping Wing, a gay little Chinaman made of peanuts, who brought a real live elephant to little lame Jim's front door. Every one liked Johnny, and he was helped to find the elephant by his friends the Black Cat Door-Stop, the Gray Flannel Elephant who had lost his tail, the pretty little Flower Girl, and the naughty Monkey in Van Dyne's Great Store.

Johnny's search took him far from home. He rode to the City in Uncle Charles's pocket, and had many thrilling adventures. At the Circus he made friends with Rajah, the great Trick Elephant. And when the next day the Circus Parade passed Jim's house, Rajah knew just what Johnny wanted and stopped the whole Parade to give happy Jim a ride.

Illustrated

THE LIVELY ADVENTURES OF JOHNNY PING WING



ETHEL CALVERT PHILLIPS

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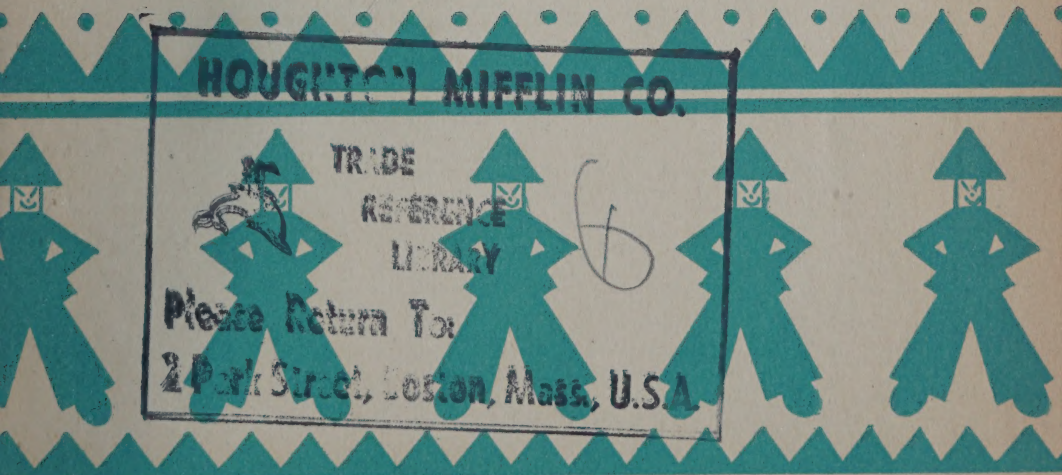

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The Lively Adventures of Johnny Ping Wing

'Dear me!' said Johnny Ping Wing. 'Doesn't any one know anything about elephants here?' (*page* 57)

The Lively Adventures of Johnny Ping Wing

BY

ETHEL CALVERT PHILLIPS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

JACK PERKINS

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK CLUB

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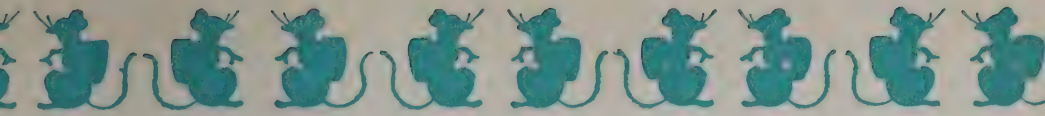
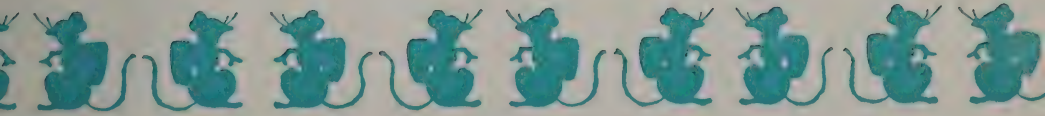


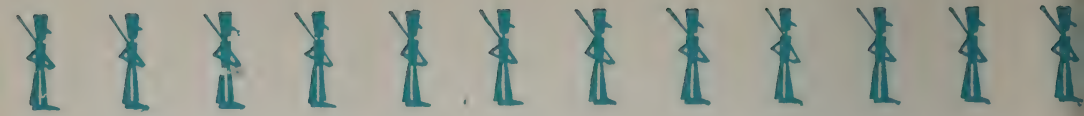
TO

ANNA LAURA HOLBROOK

STAUNCH FRIEND, GENTLE CRITIC

GALLANT HEART





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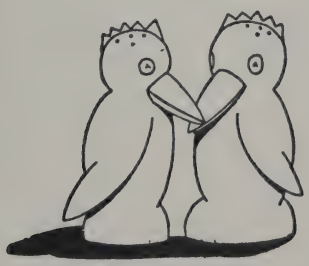


The Lively Adventures of Johnny Ping Wing

The Lively Adventures of Johnny Ping Wing

CHAPTER I

JOHNNY PING WING

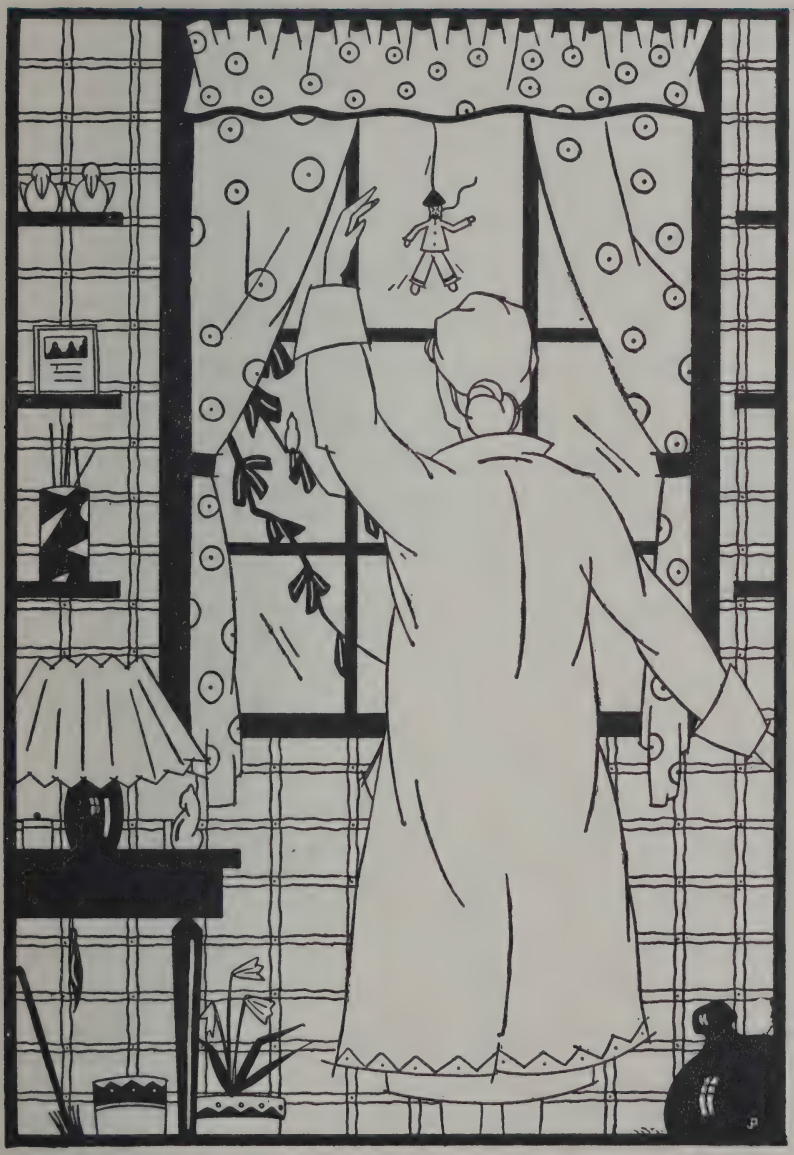
JOHNNY PING WING hung in the window of the Daffodil Shop and smiled and whirled and twirled.

Johnny Ping Wing was a little Chinaman made of peanuts. He had been placed in the window by Miss Martha Pretty, who kept the Daffodil Shop, and who now stood watching Johnny as he spun merrily round and round on the end of a string.

'There!' said Miss Martha, smiling as Johnny waved his arms and let his feet kick gracefully into the air. 'You will sell quickly, I haven't a doubt. I used to love peanut Chinamen when I was a little girl!'

Then Miss Martha, who herself looked like a daffodil with her bright golden hair and her gay green smock, fell to dusting the pretty vases and candlesticks and cups that filled the window of her yellow and green shop with its bunch of daffodils painted on the door. And Johnny Ping Wing, left to himself, opened his twinkling black eyes to their widest and looked about him to see what he might see.

He was a gay little figure swinging there on the string that was fastened to the tip of his pointed yellow silk hat. His wide silken trousers were golden yellow too. His coat was a lovely blue trimmed with the smallest brass buttons ever seen. His narrow almond eyes were black and bright and full of fun. His nose was a droll little dot, nothing more, and his tiny mouth wore a curious smile, while from under his bright silk hat there hung a long black pigtail, made of shoe thread and braided as nicely as you please. Johnny was proud of his pigtail. He thought it very beautiful and ornamental, as indeed it was. Not many people nowadays can boast such a fine pigtail as did Johnny Ping Wing.



There were many things, both inside the Shop and out, for Johnny Ping Wing to see as he swung smiling there.

Within the Shop were all sorts of colored bowls and pitchers and plates ranged neatly on counters and shelves. There were lamps of many shapes and colors, both large and small. There were work-baskets and flower-baskets and scrap-baskets, colored and sweet grass and plain. There were book-ends and door-stops, paper-weights and ink-wells, pepper-pots and salt-cellars, too. There were story-books and picture-books, and even a few toys. Indeed, there were so many pretty objects in the Daffodil Shop that Johnny Ping Wing thought it would take him a week to see them all.

Outside the Shop there was something passing almost every moment. Automobiles rolled up and down the street. Ladies walked to and fro. Little boys and girls ran gayly by. Often the people stopped and looked into the window of the Daffodil Shop. The little boys and girls flattened their noses against the glass and breathed heavily as they gazed, and when they spied Johnny Ping Wing,

they cried 'Ah!' and looked wistful, as if they wanted him very much for their own.

As the morning wore on, people began coming into the Shop to buy. Every time the door opened, Johnny Ping Wing gave a fidgety jerk that set him twirling, for every time he thought to himself, 'Perhaps that person is coming in to buy *me!*'

But nobody bought Johnny Ping Wing.

'I will take that yellow pitcher, Miss Pretty,' said one. 'It is just the size to hold our cream for tea.'

'How much is that large blue bowl, Miss Pretty?' asked another. 'I would like it for a present for my sister, I think.'

'Have you amber glasses for lemonade, Miss Pretty?'

'I want a box of writing-paper and a bottle of ink, please.'

'Do you keep birthday cards?'

'Mother says please send her a five-cent pencil with a rubber on the end.'

So many different people, so many different needs!

'What fun to keep a shop!' thought Johnny Ping Wing to himself.

He liked to watch Miss Martha as she stepped about the Shop. He liked the way she wrapped and tied her parcels, cutting off the string with a sharp snap of her shears. He liked to see her count out the change, never once dropping a penny on the floor.

Johnny's bright black eyes saw all that was going on. As for the different noises in the street, Johnny soon learned to know what they meant.

With his eyes shut he could tell by the footsteps who was passing by. He knew the tip-tap, tip-tap of the ladies from the trippety, trippety, trippety of the children and the occasional thump-bump, thump-bump of the men. Not many men passed the Shop, for most of them went into the City in the morning on the train.

The hoot or wail of the automobile horns did not frighten Johnny once he had learned what to expect from the big shining cars or neat wagons that passed in procession up and down the street.

He was glad to see that dogs were left outside the Shop when their mistresses came within.

'You may bark all you please,' said Johnny to the dogs (but not so loud that any one could hear), 'but you can't reach me.' And he even went so far as to wrinkle up his nose at a white curly dog who yelped and snapped and jumped at the window in the hope of catching Johnny in his teeth and having a good play with him.

But presently a strange noise came up the street, a noise that Johnny didn't know at all. It was a loud and piercing and angry noise, and before long the person who was making it came in sight.

It was a little boy who was being jerked along the street by his mother's hand. The little boy's face was red, tears were rolling down his cheeks, his mouth was wide open, and he screamed without stopping. Under his arm he carried a large yellow duck, a duck that would float on the water and not sink.

Just in front of the Shop window, the little boy stood still. His mother tried to pull him along, but he braced his feet on the sidewalk and would not stir. Johnny's eyes popped in his head. He didn't know little boys ever behaved that way.

Then suddenly Johnny gave a startled twitch on his string. For the little boy had thrown his yellow duck on the pavement and was jumping up and down on it with all his might and main.

Crash! Split! Smash!

The duck lay flat on the sidewalk, crushed and broken, never to float again.

The little boy still danced on the sidewalk, but his cries were growing fainter, and soon he let his mother draw him aside to the Shop window and wipe the tears from off his face.

As he stood there, he spied Johnny Ping Wing.

'I want him!' he cried, pointing up at Johnny. 'I want him, I want him, I do!'

His face puckered and he opened his mouth to scream again. He scarcely listened as his mother hastily said, 'Don't cry! Don't cry! We will go inside and I will buy it for you.'

In spite of this, it seemed for a moment as if the little boy meant to have another tantrum then and there.

But he let his mother pull him into the Shop with not a look behind at the poor broken duck, who lay on the pavement deserted and forlorn.

Now you may imagine just how frightened was Johnny Ping Wing. If that little boy bought him, he knew what would happen without doubt.

'He will squeeze me and crush me and tear me to bits,' thought Johnny, trembling upon his string.

His arms and legs grew quite stiff with horror. His pigtail stuck out straight behind.

'I'll run away,' thought Johnny Ping Wing.

But how could he run when he was fastened tight to his string?

'I'll hide,' thought Johnny, looking wildly round.

But one glance showed him that he had no chance at all to hide.

So Johnny hung there on his string, his face screwed into a little knot, as miserable as he could be, and waited to see what was going to happen to him. Already he could feel the clutch of the little boy's hands, pulling and tearing him to bits.

But Johnny had no cause for worry. Miss Martha Pretty had seen the tantrum from the window, though she was far away at the back of the Shop when the little boy and his mother entered the door.

'No, the little Chinaman is not for sale at present,' said Miss Martha Pretty in answer to the question the little boy's mother asked. 'He is the only sample I have. But perhaps your little boy might like one of these new picture-books, indestructible ones.'

'He is upset this morning,' murmured the little boy's mother, 'because he has a cold, and I couldn't let him go down to the brook with his duck. But I think he will like a picture-book, this one, about fire engines and automobiles.'

Yes, the little boy did like the picture-book and

went peacefully off with the book tucked under his arm.

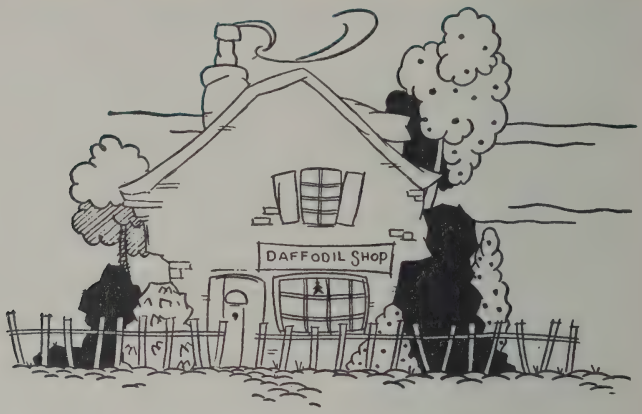
Johnny Ping Wing felt more peaceful, too. His face unscrewed, his arms and legs hung limp, his pigtail lay down flat as a pigtail should.

'Miss Martha will look out for me,' thought he, giving her a grateful look. 'I shan't worry any more.'

So he hung and swung and enjoyed the sights, and thought in his heart how kind Miss Martha was to him.

Almost every one, going in or out, looked up at Johnny Ping Wing in the window smiling and swinging on his string. But when twelve o'clock came, he was still hanging there.

As the whistles blew and the Town clock chimed noon, Miss Pretty slipped on her hat and coat, placed a sign in the window that read 'Closed from 12 to 1,' and, stepping out, locked the door behind her and walked off up the street.



CHAPTER II

IN THE DAFFODIL SHOP

For perhaps one whole minute after Miss Pretty had gone, the Daffodil Shop was as quiet as quiet could be. Then suddenly everything that could talk or walk began to chatter and to move about the Shop.

Johnny Ping Wing eyed them in amazement, for he hadn't an idea that these objects ever made a sound or stirred from out their places.

But they did. Indeed they did.

Six funny little Bird Pepper-Pots went hopping and flying about, tumbling down and picking themselves up, and getting in one another's way.

'Me-e-ow!' shrilled a large Black Cat Door-Stop, who had stood all morning with arched back and raised tail on the floor just beneath Johnny Ping Wing. 'How tired I am of standing! My tail feels as if it would break off any moment. S-s-s-t-t! I hope I have time for a nap before Martha Pretty comes back.'

Creeping under the counter, the big Black Cat curled himself into a ball and shut his eyes for a comfortable forty winks.

On a shelf near Johnny sat three White Swans who were meant to hold flowers. He watched them slowly bend and twist their long white necks and flap and preen their beautiful wide wings. But whenever they caught Johnny's eye, they scornfully closed their own and turned their heads away in a most haughty fashion.

On the same shelf, next the Swans, stood a pretty little Flower Girl, who, besides the gay china posies in her tray, could also carry matches in the basket which she bore upon her back. She was not proud at all, but pleasant and friendly, Johnny could see at a glance.

She waved her hand to Johnny and nodded at the Swans as she called, 'Poor things! They can't help it. They act that way with every one. Don't notice them, but tell me who you are.'

'My name is Johnny Ping Wing. Miss Martha says so,' began Johnny, very glad of a chance to speak.

Then he gave himself a most tremendous whirl which was meant to take the place of a bow. For you can see for yourself why Johnny couldn't take off his hat. If he had, he would have fallen into a delicate green-and-white teacup in the window below and perhaps have broken it all to bits.

'What a beautiful name!' smiled the Flower Girl when Johnny had stopped twirling and was only dancing up and down in the air. 'You must be a foreigner, are you not?'

Johnny shook his head doubtfully. He was about to tell that Miss Martha Pretty had made him the night before out of a bowl of peanuts, a bottle of ink, a spool of thread, and a few scraps of silk — black eyes, yellow trousers, blue coat, pigtail, and all. For Johnny was truthful.

But before he had a chance to answer, the Flower Girl was speaking again.

'I am a foreigner myself,' said she pensively, 'and so are many others in the Daffodil Shop. I come from Italy. And those little Silver Mice on the shelf below who carry boxes for salt upon their backs have journeyed all the way from England and were not seasick once, so they say.'

'It is true,' squeaked the Silver Mice proudly as Johnny looked them in the eye. 'We were not sea-sick once.'

'That was good fortune,' remarked Johnny, 'and you deserved it, I am sure.'

He had taken an instant fancy to the little Mice, they were so modest and agreeable. Indeed, he thought every one in the Daffodil Shop, with the exception of the haughty Swans, very pleasant, and he now said as much to the friendly Flower Girl, who looked delighted at his praise.

'It is a pleasant place,' she agreed, 'and we are all so happy here. Of course we want some one to buy us; no one wishes to be left on the shelf; but we are always sorry when it is our turn to leave the Shop.'

'Do you think I am likely to be sold to-day?' asked Johnny Ping Wing in a low voice.

The Little Flower Girl seemed so wise about the ways of the Shop that he felt she could answer almost any question he might ask.

'That I couldn't say,' answered the Little Flower Girl frankly. 'You may and you may not. I have been here two weeks. There were four of us and my three sisters have been sold. You never can tell, but I should say ——'

What the Little Flower Girl meant to say Johnny never knew, for at that moment there arose in the Daffodil Shop a clatter of feet and a most frightful whooping sound. Down the aisle charged two Indians on horseback, shaking their feathered heads and uttering war-whoops in a blood-curdling way.

They came to a stop on the floor in front of the window and glared up at poor Johnny Ping Wing, whooping all the while.

The noise was deafening, but Johnny managed to hear the Little Flower Girl's hasty whisper.

'They are Book-Ends,' she murmured, 'and the noisiest people in the Shop. They are very pas-

sionate, and we never know what they mean to do next. Can't you bow or say something polite to please them? They talk of nothing but of scalping people and I can see their eye is fixed on your pigtail now.'

Johnny's pigtail! His precious pigtail in danger! Johnny fell into a panic at the thought. He was completely taken aback, the attack was so unexpected. What had he ever done to these Indians that they should wish to pull his pigtail from off his head?

He tried to think of something polite to say to calm these blood-thirsty savages. But all he could think of was 'Good-morning, Sirs,' and he knew that would never do. But at least he could bow, a whirling bow, that is. So Johnny began to whirl. He whirled so fast that he couldn't see. He whirled with such grace that the whole Shop stood still to watch him. Even the Indians stopped whooping, and the Black Cat Door-Stop crept out from under the counter to see what was going on.

But as his whirl slackened, Johnny Ping Wing glanced out of the window and saw Miss Martha Pretty stepping up the street.

'Miss Martha!' he gasped, twirling slower and slower still. 'Miss Martha Pretty! At the door!'

Miss Martha Pretty on the doorstep put her key in the keyhole and opened the door. The quiet little Shop was just as she had left it. Not a sound, not a movement, save that Johnny Ping Wing in the window swayed slightly upon his string.

He was smiling, too. All afternoon he smiled. He was remembering how meekly, how silently, how swiftly those two wild Indians had scuttled back into their places on the shelf.

The afternoon sun shone into the window of the Daffodil Shop and warmed Johnny through and through. He nodded and dozed as the sun sank lower in the sky, until suddenly Johnny Ping Wing woke with a start that nearly jerked his head off his body.

A noise had wakened him, a puffing, a whistling, a screeching noise, and very near at hand at that.

Johnny whirled round to see if Miss Martha Pretty were not frightened. No, she sat at her desk calmly writing figures into a book. Then Johnny turned to the Little Flower Girl. She was watching

him with her usual sweet smile. Her lips moved without a sound.

'The train from the City,' said the Little Flower Girl. 'The ten minutes of six.'

'Oh, ho!' thought Johnny Ping Wing to himself. 'So this is the ten minutes of six.'

Looking out of the window, Johnny presently saw the passengers from the train walk up the street, past the Shop, on their way into the Town.

On they went, men and women, fast and slow, brisk and tired.

But now one of them stopped in front of the Shop, a man, a pleasant-looking man, Johnny thought. He came up the walk, he opened the door, he stepped inside.

Evidently he knew Miss Martha Pretty.

'Good-evening, Martha,' said the man. 'I stopped in to see if you had something I could take home to Jim to-night.'

'Good-evening, Charles. I think I may have something,' was Miss Martha's answer. 'How is Jim to-day? Is his knee getting better?'

'Yes, but slowly,' replied the man. 'He has to lie in bed and his knee is pretty painful. When I left the house this morning, I promised to bring him home a present to-night, and it would never do for his Uncle Charles to forget.'

'No, indeed,' agreed Miss Martha. 'That would never do. Just look around and perhaps you will see something that Jim would like.'

So Uncle Charles looked round, and at the very first glance he spied Johnny Ping Wing.

'What is that droll little fellow up there?' he asked. 'Is he for sale, too?'

'Yes, he is, to the right person,' answered Miss Martha, reaching up and lifting Johnny down. 'He is a high-class Chinaman and his name is Johnny Ping Wing.'

'He is a nice little fellow,' said Uncle Charles, with a sharp glance at Johnny that took him in from top to toe. 'Is his laundry work good? And can he speak English? I am too old to learn to talk Chinese.'

'He is the best laundry man in Town,' was Miss Martha's reply as she swung Johnny slowly round

and round. 'He speaks English perfectly. I taught him myself.'

'I will take him then,' said Uncle Charles. 'He will be good company for Jim and keep him from being lonely while he has to lie in bed.'

Miss Martha laid Johnny on a square of paper and brought out her ball of cord and her sharp shears.

'Good-bye, Johnny Ping Wing,' said Miss Martha. 'Be a good friend to Jim.'

Then Miss Martha wrapped and tied Johnny Ping Wing and cut off the cord with a snap of the shears. Uncle Charles took the parcel and let it drop into his pocket with a thump.

'Good-night, Martha,' said Uncle Charles. 'Put Johnny on my bill. I will be in again soon.'

'Good-night, Charles,' answered Miss Martha. 'Give my love to Jim, and be sure you comb Johnny's pigtail every night. He and I are both proud of that pigtail, you know.'

Johnny Ping Wing didn't stir until Uncle Charles was out of the Shop and climbing the hill toward home. Then he gave a little bounce of joy that made his peanuts rattle in their shells.

'Sold!' said Johnny Ping Wing. 'The very first day! And to Uncle Charles for Jim! I am going to be a good friend to Jim as Miss Martha said. Just wait and see.'

CHAPTER III

JIM

THE moment Johnny Ping Wing saw Jim, he liked him.

When Uncle Charles reached the house, he carried the little parcel straight up to Jim's bedroom, and, through his paper wrapping, Johnny heard him say, 'I have brought somebody home with me to keep you company, Jim.'

Then Johnny felt fingers fumbling with the string and unwrapping the paper, and there he was, looking up into the face of a little boy who first smiled faintly and then began to laugh when he caught sight of Johnny Ping Wing.

The little boy laughed until he had to lean back against his pillows.

'Uncle Charles!' was all he could say. 'Oh, Uncle Charles!'

'So you like him, do you?' said Uncle Charles, looking pleased. 'Well, I like him myself. See him spin.'

Holding Johnny Ping Wing by the cord in his hat, Uncle Charles made him spin round and round and round.

You may be sure that Johnny whirled his liveliest and his best. For although the little boy laughed so gayly and even clapped his hands, Johnny could see that he was pale and thin.

'He has been sick and his knee hurts him,' thought Johnny. 'I must be just as agreeable to him as I can be.'

So Johnny waved his arms and kicked his toes and whirled now fast, now slow, until at last Uncle Charles stood up and hung Johnny on a nail by the window at the foot of the bed.

'He will keep you company when we are at dinner,' said Uncle Charles.

'What is his name?' asked Jim, lying back on his pillows and smiling up at his new little friend. 'Hasn't he any name?'

'Of course he has,' answered Uncle Charles. 'His name is Johnny Ping Wing. He is a good laundry man, Miss Martha says, and he is going to do up my collars when he is not busy playing with you. He is very proud of his long pigtail, too. Just remember that. Now, Johnny, take good care of Jim until I come back again.'

With a wave of the hand to Johnny and Jim, Uncle Charles went away and left them alone.

From his nail by the window, Johnny Ping Wing stared down at Jim and from his nest of white pillows Jim stared back.

What Jim saw we know — a gay and lively little Chinaman in his suit of yellow and blue, with bright black eyes and a merry smile and a long black pigtail that flapped to and fro as Johnny swung idly on his string.

What Johnny saw was a little boy with brown hair and brown eyes and thin white cheeks and thin white hands. The little boy had been ill, it was plain

to be seen. He lay very still in bed and he kept his legs stretched straight down under the covers and did not move them at all.

But in spite of this, the little boy had not forgotten how to laugh, as we know. Now he smiled again into Johnny's face with a twinkle in his eye, and next he laughed out loud, his funny faint little laugh. This laugh pleased Johnny Ping Wing so well that he began to sway back and forth upon his string. For Johnny liked Jim. He felt sorry for him, lying there, and he hoped with all his heart that he would bring pleasure and happiness to this little boy.

'It is a good beginning if I make him laugh,' thought Johnny Ping Wing.

And he pointed his toes and waved his arms in the breeze that drifted in at the open window until Jim laughed aloud again.

Then Jim spoke to Johnny, just as if he were a real person, which made Johnny happier than words can tell.

'I am glad you are here,' said Jim to Johnny, 'for sometimes it is lonely lying in bed. Mother stays

with me all she can, and Grandma sits with me and reads to me too. Uncle Charles comes in every morning before he goes to the City and at night again when he comes home. Father does, too, when he has a minute to spare. But Father is Mayor of this Town, and you wouldn't believe all the men he has to go out and see, nor the people that come here to see him. A mayor is the busiest person in the world. Father says so and we all think so too.'

Johnny's head nodded 'yes' as he swayed to and fro, and he looked so interested that Jim talked on.

'I can't have the boys come in to see me because when they are here I don't lie still. And I have to lie still if I want my knee to get well. Shall I tell you how I hurt my knee? We were all climbing a tree, all the boys in my very own back garden, and I went up too high, and the branch broke. And the next thing I knew I was lying here in bed. But I am getting better. The Doctor says so, and he ought to know.'

This was such good news that Johnny and Jim smiled straight into one another's faces.

'I don't know just when I will be well. The

Doctor thinks perhaps I will be out of bed next week,' went on Jim. 'Sometimes my knee hurts me so that I think I must scream. But I don't scream and I don't cry, except when the Doctor is hurting me, and then the tears just run out of my eyes whether I want them to or not.'

Johnny nodded again in the evening breeze. Any one could see at a glance that Jim was not a crying kind of a boy.

'Sometimes my knee hurts me in the night when every one is asleep,' confided Jim. 'But now that I have you to talk to I shan't care so much. Will you mind if I wake you in the night? Can you fall asleep easily again?'

Johnny wanted to say out loud, 'I shan't mind in the least. Wake me all you like.'

But instead he nodded his head so violently that he spun round and round. His cord twisted and slowly unwound again and again, and this so delighted Jim that when Uncle Charles came into the room Jim begged him to call his mother and grandmother and make Johnny Ping Wing spin for them.

Even Jim's father, the Mayor, had time to peep in

before going out to see a man down town. And they all declared that Johnny was the pleasantest, funniest little fellow they had seen in a long, long time.

In his turn Johnny liked Jim's family very well.

'Jim's mother is pretty,' thought he, watching her smooth and settle Jim's pillows with a gentle hand. 'Her hair and her eyes are just like Jim's. I wish I had a mother. I would like one like her for myself.'

You see Johnny Ping Wing had never had a mother except Miss Martha Pretty, and really he didn't think of her as a mother at all.

Now he smiled so sweetly upon Jim's mother that she said, 'What a cheerful little fellow, Jim! And his clothes are so gay! It is a pleasure to have him around.'

Jim's grandmother sat close beside the bed and took Jim's hand in hers. She was a small lady in a gray silk dress and Johnny thought she looked gentle and kind.

'Your Chinaman seems a friendly little fellow,' said Grandma, patting Jim's hand, 'and he has

learned, like our Jim, that a smile is better than a frown.'

Jim looked pleased at this and bashfully turned his face away, while Johnny Ping Wing felt proud as proud could be as he listened to Grandma's praise. He made up his mind at that moment that he would be just as cheerful and merry and good as Jim's family expected him to be.

Johnny and Uncle Charles exchanged a friendly look. Johnny seemed to amuse both Uncle Charles and the Mayor.

'He is my laundry man,' said Uncle Charles. 'He is going to do up all my collars and Jim's.'

'Is that so, Johnny?' asked the Mayor. 'Remember, no tickee, no shirtee.'

This made every one laugh, though Jim and Johnny were not quite sure what was meant. But at any rate Johnny knew how to spin, and showed his skill several times before Uncle Charles went off to read his paper and the Mayor went down town to see a man.

When Jim's bedtime came, Johnny watched him safely tucked in for the night. He waited until

Jim's eyes shut tight and he was fast asleep. Then Johnny closed his own eyes and fell into a comfortable doze.

The room was dark and the house was quiet when Johnny woke with a start. He felt certain that some one had called his name, and sure enough there came a whisper from the bed.

'Johnny! Johnny Ping Wing! Are you awake?'

For a moment Johnny Ping Wing didn't know just how to answer Jim. Then he gently kicked his heels against the window-pane, which made quite a rattle in the silent night and told Jim what he wanted to know.

'I hear you,' said he. 'I am glad you are awake. My knee hurts me and I can't sleep. There is something I forgot to tell you last night. Do you know what I want more than anything in the world? I want to see a live elephant, a real live elephant, not a make-believe one at all.'

Jim paused for a moment as if to give Johnny time to take in this idea and to recover from his surprise, if he felt any.

Then he went on again.

'I want to touch the elephant, too. I want to feel him and see him lift his feet and swing his trunk. I did see them once at the Park and I threw peanuts into their mouths. Elephants like peanuts, you know. What's the matter? Are you cold?'

For Johnny had been seized with a fit of shuddering when he heard Jim say that he had thrown peanuts into the elephants' mouths. His own peanuts rattled in their shells with fright, and Johnny knocked against the woodwork until he was afraid that Jim's mother would hear him and come in.

But he made up his mind that he would not be a coward.

'No elephant is going to catch me,' thought Johnny. 'I don't like cowards and I won't be afraid. I won't be afraid,' said he again and again.

Presently he was able to listen to Jim's voice still talking on about elephants and what he meant to do.

'When I grow up I am going to be a hunter,' said Jim, peering up at Johnny through the dusk of the room. 'I am going to the jungle and hunt for elephants, and catch them, too. I shan't hurt them,

but I shall bring them home and perhaps keep tnem out in our own back garden. Father will build me a house for them and maybe I will train them and open a show.'

Jim paused here for breath, and Johnny kicked his heels faintly to show that he was listening still.

'But I don't want to wait until I grow up to see an elephant,' went on Jim. 'I want to see one right now. I don't even want to wait till my knee gets well. I want to see an elephant right now, I do.'

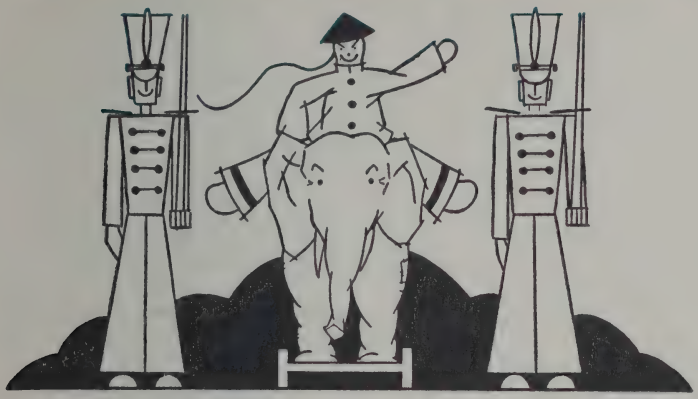
Jim was growing sleepy. His voice fell and rose and fell again.

Johnny was careful not to stir nor make a sound. He wanted Jim to go to sleep again.

But Jim roused himself once more.

'I have lots of pictures of elephants,' said he sleepily. 'Father and Uncle Charles have brought me books and books. I will show them to you to-morrow. Don't forget, Johnny. Don't let me forget.'

In another moment Jim was asleep, and Johnny, making up his mind again that he would not be afraid of even an elephant, fell fast asleep too.



CHAPTER IV

THE GRAY FLANNEL ELEPHANT

THE first thing in the morning Jim remembered that he meant to show Johnny Ping Wing his elephant books. So Johnny was taken down from his nail and placed on a pillow beside Jim's head, and slowly and carefully Jim showed the pictures and told all about elephants as he turned the leaves.

'Here are elephants in the jungle, Johnny. See how tall and thick the grass grows, and see the tigers and the monkeys and the bears all walking round.

'Here are elephants piling logs of wood. If I had an elephant and we wanted to build a new house, he could be a big help, I know.

'Here is a boy riding on a little elephant's back. See him hold on by the elephant's ear. And this is the boy's mother, sitting in a little house on top of a great big elephant, riding along, too. Wouldn't you like to ride on an elephant's back, Johnny Ping Wing? I would, and I will do it some day, too.'

Jim didn't wait for Johnny Ping Wing to answer, which was just as well, for it is certain that Johnny wanted to answer 'no.' He thought the elephants

awkward and clumsy. He didn't think to ride on their backs would be pleasant at all. As for their liking for peanuts, Johnny couldn't bear to think of it. The very notion made him shudder and shake. So he sat still and only smiled as Jim showed picture after picture, chattering all the while.

Jim enjoyed it, if Johnny didn't, and, when only half finished with the picture-books, he was sorry to see the Doctor walk into the room.

He had come to fix Jim's knee. And now Jim's mother came to help, and Johnny was hung back on his nail on the wall.

The Doctor was quick and skillful and as gentle as he could be. But in spite of all this he did hurt, and Jim had to press his lips close together and hold tighter and tighter to his mother's hand. He didn't scream and he didn't cry, but the tears rolled down his cheeks and made the front of his manly blue dressing-gown quite wet.

To Johnny Ping Wing on the wall it looked as if Jim's eyes grew larger and his cheeks grew whiter every moment that passed. And at last it really seemed to Johnny Ping Wing as if his own little

heart would burst inside his peanut body, he felt so sorry for Jim.

'I didn't know I cared so much for Jim,' thought Johnny Ping Wing, trying to keep his own upper lip stiff so that he wouldn't cry. 'But I do. I care a lot. I wish I could do something for him to show him how much I care.'

Then suddenly a great idea came to Johnny Ping Wing!

'I know what to do,' thought he with a bounce that made his shells clatter. 'I will bring him a live elephant, a real live elephant for Jim.'

This was a stupendous undertaking! A moment s thought would tell anybody that. A real live elephant at Jim's own door! And how in the world to do it Johnny Ping Wing couldn't guess.

But that didn't daunt him — not he!

'I can try,' said Johnny Ping Wing to himself. 'At least I can try.'

Then he remembered how the elephants had eaten Jim's peanuts. And Johnny Ping Wing turned cold.

'I am so small,' quavered Johnny. 'An elephant

is so big. What chance would I have if it came to a fight?'

And Johnny Ping Wing trembled until he shook like a leaf in the wind.

But he looked again at his little friend lying back white and tired on his pillow while the Doctor bandaged his knee.

'I *won't* be afraid,' said Johnny Ping Wing, straightening his back and stiffening up so that he wouldn't shake. 'Even if the elephant does like peanuts, he can't eat me more than once. Jim was brave. I will be brave, too.'

And for a little peanut man, small enough to slip into Uncle Charles's pocket, this was really a very fine, unselfish thought to have.

Once he had made up his mind, Johnny Ping Wing hung there on his nail and thought and thought what to do. How should he find a real live elephant? Who would show him the way?

'I will look around first, as soon as I have a chance,' decided Johnny Ping Wing, 'and perhaps I will get an idea where to begin.'

Now Johnny's chance to look around came as

soon as the Doctor, after packing his little black bag and patting Jim on the head, had gone out of the room. For Jim's mother made all the pillows very smooth and soft, and pulled down the blinds, and sat quietly beside Jim's bed. And presently both Jim's mother and Johnny Ping Wing were glad to see that Jim's eyes were closed and that he had fallen asleep. He was tired out, poor Jim.

Then Jim's mother tiptoed out of the room, and she hadn't much more than crossed the threshold when, with a jump and a twitch, Johnny came down off his nail and landed on the rug so softly that really no one could have heard a sound.

'I mustn't lose a moment,' said wise little Johnny, 'for when Jim wakes up, I must be found on the floor by the window as if I had fallen off my nail.'

He pattered swiftly round Jim's bedroom, but there was nothing new to be seen, nothing that would help him bring a real live elephant to Jim. So he trotted boldly through the half-open door into the next room and found himself in Jim's play-room.

He didn't need any one to tell him that it was Jim's play-room. He could see it for himself at a

glance. For there were toys all round the room, toys that looked as if they had been played with, toys that looked as if they and a little boy together had had a good time.

There was a dapple-gray Rocking-Horse who had lost most of the paint from his rockers and whose tail was woefully thin, but who had plenty of prance left in him yet, as Johnny Ping Wing could tell. There was a company of gay red-and-blue Soldiers, standing at attention as Jim had left them the day he hurt his knee. There were trains of cars and fire engines, a stable holding a wagon and a team of horses, brown and white. There was a game of nine pins and a pair of skates. There were three sail-boats with trim white sails and gayly painted hulls. Over in a corner lay a bat and a ball. They looked so forlorn lying there, as if they wanted a good lively game, that Johnny Ping Wing couldn't help speaking out loud.

'Dear me!' said he with a glance round the room, 'you all look lonely, as if you missed Jim.'

At this the Toys stirred in their places, and those who had heads nodded them up and down. The

Rocking-Horse, who seemed the oldest toy, swayed to and fro and opened his red mouth and spoke.

'We do miss Jim, young man,' said he, with an earnest twitch of his ears. 'We miss him more than we can tell. There is nothing in the world we wouldn't do, every one of us, if only we could help to make him happy and well.'

'Why, you are just like me,' cried Johnny in surprise. 'I want to do something for Jim, too. Have you anything special in mind,' he asked politely, 'for of course you have known Jim much longer than I have, you know?'

But the Toys shook their heads at this question and allowed the Rocking-Horse to answer for them again.

'We have thought and thought,' answered the Rocking-Horse, impatiently switching his long thin tail, 'and we cannot think of anything new. Of course I would give him the very finest ride I could, and the Soldiers would be glad to march for him until they dropped. The sailboats long to go sailing for him in the brook and —— But what is the use of talking any more? We all would do our best to give him a good time, but that won't make him well.

I don't suppose you have thought of anything to do,' he added in rather a gloomy voice, looking down his long nose at Johnny Ping Wing.

'Yes, I have,' spoke up Johnny proudly, 'and I will tell you about it if you would like to hear.'

The Toys crowded round Johnny and held their breath. They didn't make a sound, they were so anxious to hear what he had to say.

But as he was about to open his mouth and begin, the Rocking-Horse interrupted him.

'Just a moment, just a moment,' said the Rocking-Horse. 'Where is the Captain of the Guard? Captain,' he continued in a low voice to the little red-and-blue figure at his side, 'suppose you send some one to open the closet door. Even if our friend inside won't come out of the corner, perhaps he will be able to hear what this gentleman has to say.'

It took the whole company of Soldiers, working hard, to open the closet door. And no sooner was it ajar than out floated a low dismal sound of sobbing that made all the Toys look sober and shake their heads.

'Dear, dear, he is at it again,' they murmured.

'Why doesn't he stop and come out where it is light and cool?'

Johnny was so curious that he completely forgot his manners. He knew a stranger shouldn't ask questions when he has come to call. But he spoke right out; he simply couldn't keep still.

'Who is that in the closet?' he asked. 'What is the matter with him? I can't talk to you while that noise is going on.'

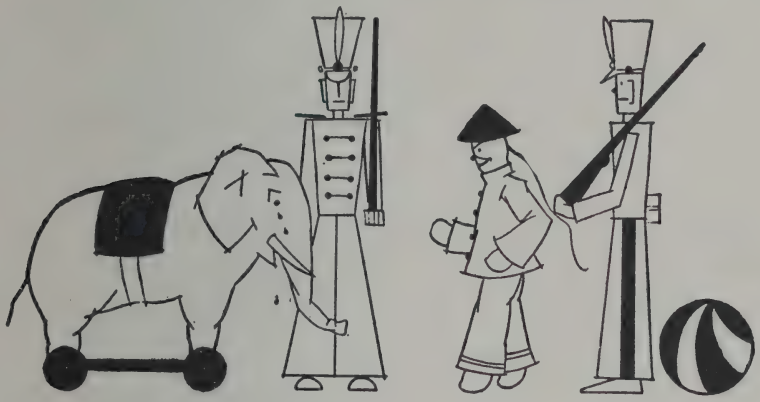
For a moment no one answered. Then the Rocking-Horse turned to the Captain of the Soldiers, who stood near by.

'Bring him out, Captain,' he ordered. 'Have your men bring him out.'

Right about face, the Soldiers, led by their Captain, disappeared into the dark closet, and presently out they marched, pulling and tugging at something heavy on the end of a string.

What on earth was it? Johnny couldn't make out until they had reached the middle of the floor.

Then he saw that it was an Elephant, a Gray Flannel Elephant, who stood blubbering and crying and making a dismal sound.



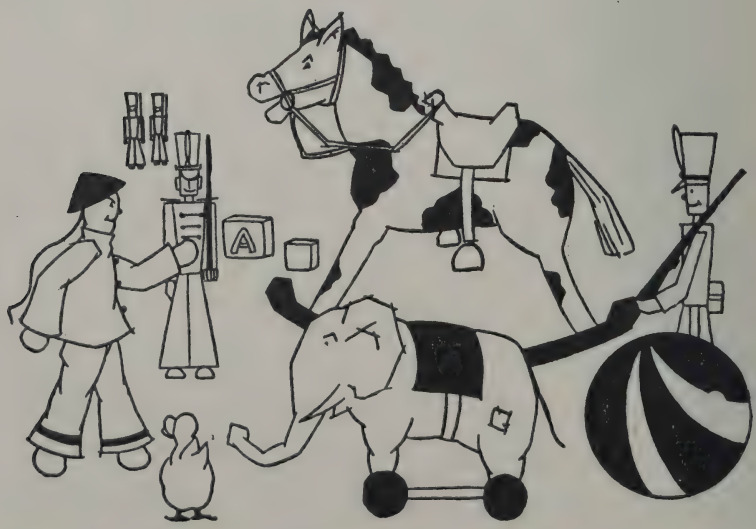
Now of this Elephant Johnny didn't feel afraid in the least. He felt sorry for him, he seemed so miserable. Johnny didn't believe this Elephant would hurt a fly. So he walked straight over to the Elephant and tapped him upon his trunk.

'What is the matter with you?' asked Johnny Ping Wing. 'What ails you that you cry?'

'Jim doesn't like me,' sniffed the Elephant, tears rolling from his shoe-button eyes and falling upon the floor with a splash, 'and I have played with Jim ever since he was a baby. Boo-hoo! The very day he was hurt he came in here and he said, "You poor thing! You have lost your tail, and the cotton is gone out of your trunk." Boo-hoo! So I hid in the

closet and I never want to come out again. It isn't because I am not alive that Jim doesn't like me. It is because I'm a fright! I know I'm a fright! And Jim doesn't like me any more. Boo-hoo!'

'Of course Jim likes you,' cried Johnny Ping Wing, shaking his head at the Soldiers, who were giggling behind their hands, and wanting to laugh himself. 'He probably was the one who pulled your tail off when he was a baby and squeezed the cotton out of your trunk, too. Why, there is nothing in the world Jim likes so well as an elephant. You all must know that.'



'We do,' called the Toys. 'We do know it well.'

Even the Gray Flannel Elephant had to nod, though he was still murmuring, 'I'm a fright! I know I'm a fright!'

'Well, then,' said Johnny Ping Wing, 'I will tell you what I am going to do for Jim. I am going to bring a real live elephant here, a real live elephant for Jim.'

'No!' exclaimed the Toys, their breath quite taken away by the splendor of this idea, while the Gray Flannel Elephant sat back on two legs, curled up his trunk, and opened his mouth in surprise. 'How ever will you do it?'

'I don't know yet,' answered Johnny Ping Wing frankly. 'I am going to look about and see. I thought I might go down to the Daffodil Shop to-night. Perhaps some one down there can give me a start. I wish you Toys would all keep your eyes and ears open. You may hear something that would be a help to me.'

'We will,' answered the Toys earnestly. 'We will.'

'And you stay out of the closet,' he added to the

Gray Flannel Elephant, 'and stop crying. Jim wouldn't like that at all.'

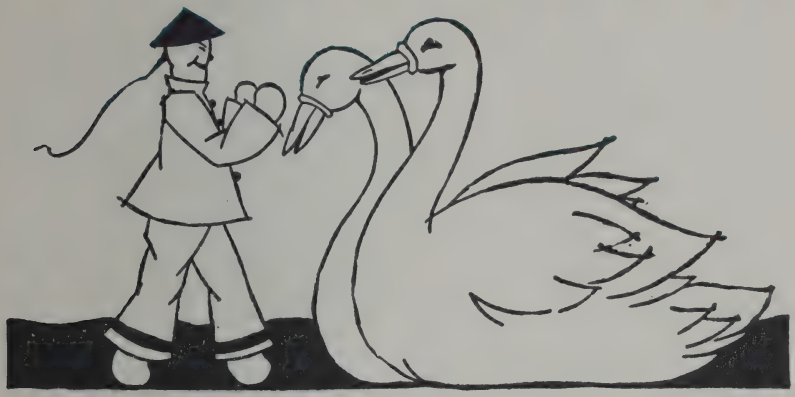
'No, he wouldn't,' chorused the Toys. 'Jim never cries himself, you know.'

'Will you help me, too?' asked Johnny of the Gray Flannel Elephant, standing before him and smiling a winning smile. 'Will you keep out of the closet and help me if you can?'

'I will,' promised the Elephant in a husky voice, wiping away his last tear with the tip of his trunk. 'I will. I promise you.'

'Well, I will be in again,' said Johnny, 'and let you know what happens. Good gracious, is that Jim stirring?'

And when, a moment later, Jim woke from his nap, there lay Johnny Ping Wing on the floor, face down, where he had fallen from his nail on the wall.



CHAPTER V

WHAT THE SWAN TOLD

It seemed that night to Johnny Ping Wing as if Jim never would go to sleep. Long after his bedtime he was thumping his pillows and asking for a drink of water and begging Grandma for 'just one more story, please.'

But at last Jim lay quiet and the house grew very still. Then Johnny Ping Wing with a twitch and a jump came down off his nail and softly stole out of the room and down the front stairs.

'I shan't worry about Jim,' said Johnny, 'for if he does wake up and speak to me and I don't answer, he will think I am sound asleep. And he

can't get out of bed and find me gone because of his knee.'

In the hall downstairs Johnny peeped round a doorway into a pleasant room. There sat Jim's mother and Grandma and Uncle Charles in the lamplight, Jim's mother and Uncle Charles each reading a book and Grandma knitting something soft and fleecy white.

If they had looked up, how surprised they would have been to see Johnny Ping Wing's twinkling black eyes fastened on them! But no one stirred, and Johnny, delighted to find the front door ajar, stole out without a sound.

'I suppose they opened the front door for a little fresh air,' said Johnny, 'but it almost looks as if they did it for me.'

How to find the Daffodil Shop? That Johnny didn't know.

'But I don't think Uncle Charles turned any corners the night he carried me home,' thought Johnny, 'and I believe if I walk straight down the street I shall come to the Daffodil Shop. I shall try it anyhow, and if I am lost I can always ask the way.'

So straight down the street trotted Johnny enjoying every step. For it was a beautiful spring night. The stars twinkled in the dark blue sky and a thin little moon hung above the tree-tops, shining silver bright. The trees rustled softly over Johnny's head. The bushes were full of new little leaves. The grass on the lawns was thick and green and felt soft to Johnny's feet. He ran gayly through it, shaking the dew drops from the blades of grass and stopping now and then to smell the daffodils and tulips or a

tender violet-and-white crocus that almost hid from his sight in the grass.

On went Johnny till the street changed from lawns and gardens into sidewalks and shops.

'I do believe I am right,' said Johnny, 'and that the Daffodil Shop is close by.'

So it was, on the very next street. Johnny's heart leaped with pleasure as he spied the bunch of daffodils painted on the door.

The window was high above Johnny's head. Not even by standing on tiptoe could he peep in. But he could walk up the front step and knock on the door. And so he did.

There was no answer, and Johnny knocked again. Still no answer, and Johnny began to wonder how he was going to get inside.

'If I could climb up to the keyhole,' thought Johnny, 'I could shout through it and tell them who I am. Or if I had a stick I could knock louder on the door. I wonder which I had better try to do. I will sit down a moment to rest and think.'

Down on the doorstep sat Johnny, his hands on his knees. The street was quiet, not a person pass-

ing by, not a sound but the wind sighing in a tree across the way.

Then behind Johnny there began a gentle creaking, a gentle creaking noise that made Johnny spring to his feet and hide himself in the deep dark shadow of the door. Louder grew the creaking and the door itself began to move. Slowly it swung open, and through the narrow crack there slipped out on the doorstep Johnny's old acquaintance, the Black Cat Door-Stop.

He stood there yawning and stretching himself until Johnny softly said, 'Hello!' Then in a jiffy he arched his back and raised his tail and turned a snarling face upon the dark corner where Johnny stood.

'S-s-s-t-t!' he began in an angry voice.

But when Johnny moved out of the shadow, he spoke in a different tone.

'Oh, it's you, is it?' said he pleasantly. 'I didn't know who it might be. I've just stepped out to stretch my legs. A cat can't be expected to stay indoors all day and all night, can he, do you think? I belong to a chorus that meets around in different

back gardens, too. But what are you doing here, if I may ask?'

'I have come to call,' answered Johnny Ping Wing. 'Are all my friends at home?'

'Yes; every one except the two wild Indian Book-Ends who wanted to scalp you the other day,' answered the Black Cat with a grin. 'They were sold this morning, so your pigtail is safe. Walk in, walk in, do.'

Johnny walked in, followed by the Black Cat, who paid him the compliment of staying home from his chorus for Johnny's sake.

All his friends in the Shop were glad to see him again. The Silver Mice Salt-Boxes came running out to meet him. The little Bird Pepper-Pots tumbled over one another in their haste to reach his side. The pretty Flower Girl smiled as if he were her dearest friend. And even the haughty Swans craned their long necks over the shelf where they sat and stared with interest at Johnny instead of closing their eyes in high disdain.

'Is it pleasant where you are living?' asked the Flower Girl, when they had all bowed and nodded and said 'How-do-you-do.'

'Very pleasant, indeed,' answered Johnny eagerly. 'I live with a little boy, the nicest little boy in the world. His name is Jim, and he has hurt his knee. He has to lie in bed, and what he wants most of all in the world is an elephant, a real live elephant, you know.'

Johnny felt quite sure that not all of his friends did know what a real live elephant was.

But nobody said so. They all exclaimed, 'No! You don't mean it! A real live elephant! Just think of that!'

'Yes,' nodded Johnny, enjoying their surprise, 'and what is more I am going to find one for him, a real live elephant for Jim.'

This time every one was so surprised that no one could speak except the Little Flower Girl.

She gave Johnny her sweetest smile and said, 'How brave you are! I know you will do it, too. But how will you go about finding a real live elephant, Johnny Ping Wing?'

'I don't know,' answered Johnny, wrinkling his forehead in thought, 'and that is why I have come down to the Daffodil Shop to-night. I thought you could tell me,' said Johnny, looking into the Flower

Girl's face, 'and that if you didn't know, somebody else would.'

The Little Flower Girl shook her head.

'I don't know a thing about elephants,' said she. 'We don't have them in Italy where I was made, and I haven't seen a single elephant here since I came to the Daffodil Shop.'

'We can tell you all about mice,' squeaked the Silver Mice Salt-Boxes. 'And something about cats, too,' they added, with a sidelong glance at the Black Cat Door-Stop. 'But we never saw an elephant, so far as we can tell.'

'S-s-s-t-t!' said the Black Cat Door-Stop, hissing in the direction of the saucy Mice and waving his tail in a fashion that made them hastily look the other way. 'No elephant would ever notice you. You are too small. I am sorry, Johnny, but I don't know any elephants just now to tell you about. We have none singing in the chorus at present. Their voices are not very good.'

Here the Black Cat gave a little cough and cleared his throat as if to say that was not the case with him.

'Dear me!' said Johnny Ping Wing, feeling quite discouraged and looking round the Shop for help. 'Doesn't any one know anything about elephants here?'

There was a craning of necks and flapping of wings among the three White Swans on the shelf. Johnny looked hopefully at them, but he didn't dare ask a question, they were so haughty and proud. They were whispering busily to one another with their heads close together. Then one of them turned to the Little Flower Girl and opened his long yellow bill and spoke.

'I never like to interfere,' said the Swan stiffly, 'but don't you remember the night Uncle Charles came in here to buy a fan?'

It sounded so funny to hear the haughty Swan talking about 'Uncle Charles' that Johnny Ping Wing wanted to laugh. But of course he didn't even smile. He looked respectfully up at the Swan, who continued to stare over his head at the Little Flower Girl.

'Yes, of course I do now that you speak of it,' answered she. 'He wanted it for a birthday present

for his mother, and Miss Martha didn't have a fan that she thought would suit. So he bought one himself in the City and brought it in to show Miss Martha the very next night.'

'Just so,' replied the Swan, bowing his head. 'It was a Japanese fan with Japanese Ladies on it, and I suggest that Mr. — er — Ping Wing try to meet those Ladies and find out where Uncle Charles bought the fan. We ourselves are Japanese, my brothers and I, and it is in such Oriental countries that elephants are found. No doubt these Ladies could tell Mr. Ping Wing whether there were elephants for sale in the Store from which they came.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you,' said Johnny gratefully, smiling up at the Swan. 'It must have been Jim's Grandma who had the birthday. I will look for the fan to-morrow. I thank you again and again.'

To which the Swan simply bowed in an elegant way and closed his eyes at Johnny Ping Wing.

The Black Cat Door-Stop walked up with Johnny. He was going to his chorus even though he were a trifle late.

'Listen when you get home,' said he to Johnny, 'and see if you can't hear my voice. It is rather a high bass.'

Johnny promised he would listen, as they parted on the corner, but once on his own doorstep Johnny found the front door shut tight.

'I shall have to stay out till morning, I suppose. I can't possibly get in,' said he, thinking aloud.

But a voice called him in answer from the crack under the door.

'No, indeed, you won't stay out,' said the voice. 'I've been watching for you for an hour or more. Go around to the back and come in at the Cat's door. I will be waiting there for you.'

The Cat's door at the back of the house was just Johnny's size. And on the other side of the door he found waiting — whom do you think? The Gray Flannel Elephant, who was now bright and cheerful with not a tear in his eye.

'I promised to help you, didn't I?' asked the Gray Flannel Elephant, looking pleased and proud at Johnny's surprise. 'And I will, for Jim's sake, every chance I can. Come now and I will help you

back on your nail. The Soldiers said I might call them in case we couldn't do it alone. And I know you'll be glad to hear that Jim hasn't wakened once.'

The Gray Flannel Elephant was as good as his word. He managed so cleverly that the red-and-blue Soldiers were not needed at all. In short order and with little trouble Johnny was hanging again upon his nail.

He was tired and sleepy, but just before he drifted off, he heard the chorus beginning in Jim's own back garden.

'There!' said Johnny to himself at a very loud note. 'That is the Black Cat Door-Stop! Hasn't he a beautiful high bass?'

CHAPTER VI

THE JAPANESE FAN

THE next day was a quiet one for both Johnny and Jim, and of this Johnny was glad, for he felt he might need his strength that night when he went to find Grandma's Japanese fan.

'I shall look for it first in Grandma's room,' decided Johnny. 'But if the fan is shut in a bureau drawer or locked in a trunk, I shall have a hard time getting it out. I hope the Japanese Ladies are agreeable and can tell me what to do.'

All day long Jim and Johnny entertained one another, Jim talking to Johnny and Johnny whirling for Jim.

Jim talked mostly about elephants. He said over

and over again how he longed to see a real elephant, and to see him close at hand. Every time he said this, he made Johnny Ping Wing feel happy and more determined than before to bring a real live elephant right there to the house for Jim.

'If it can be done, I will do it,' said Johnny to himself as he gayly whirled and twirled and kicked and danced to please his little friend.

His antics were so funny that he made Jim laugh again and again. Johnny did not care how many times he spun round if only Jim were amused. And when night came and Jim was fast asleep, Johnny felt that he had spent a pleasant and useful day.

'But now my real day's work will begin,' said Johnny as he slid down the shade-cord to the window-sill and from the window-sill to the floor. 'I do hope I am able to find that fan.'

Johnny knew that Grandma's room was down at the end of the hall. He hoped that Grandma herself was peacefully knitting downstairs as he had seen her the evening before.

He hurried along the hall and peeped round the door into Grandma's room. It was empty.

'What good fortune!' thought Johnny Ping Wing.

Nimbly he climbed upon Grandma's bureau. There was nothing there that looked like a fan. Bottles of perfume, a tortoise-shell brush and comb, a silver box for hairpins. Johnny could see at a glance that a fan could not be hidden behind any of these.

Next Johnny tried Grandma's table. On the lower shelf stood her work-basket. There was no fan in it; Johnny himself made sure of that. On top of the table were scattered books and a writing-tablet and a pretty inlaid box.

'Perhaps the fan is in that,' thought Johnny hopefully.

But when he peeped inside, he found it held nothing but spools of silk.

'I will try the desk next,' said Johnny, 'before I begin to open bureau drawers.'

He said this lightly to keep up his spirits, for how he could open a big bureau drawer Johnny didn't know.

Up on the old-fashioned desk he scrambled, and began to peer into the pigeon-holes, one after the

other. The desk was neat as neat could be, and Johnny did not disturb a single thing.

In the first pigeon-hole were blotters, a great pile of them, red and green and white. In the second pigeon-hole were envelopes and paper.

'Good paper, too,' said Johnny wisely, just as if he knew.

The third pigeon-hole was filled with letters, letters that Grandma had received from her friends.

'She hasn't answered them yet,' said Johnny.

And, without a doubt, he was right.

In the fourth pigeon-hole there lay a box, a long narrow box as white as snow.

Johnny's heart began to beat when he saw that box, and slowly, very slowly, he pulled it out upon the desk and lifted off the lid.

Within the box lay a fan, a long, a slim, a sweet-smelling fan. The moment Johnny saw it, he knew he had found the birthday Japanese fan. Oh, now, if only those Japanese Ladies could tell him where to find an elephant for Jim!

He was pleased, then, and not at all startled to hear a voice speaking to him, a friendly, ladylike

voice that certainly came straight out from the folds ot the fan.

'Won't you take the fan out of the box, please, and open it?' said the voice. 'We would like a little more light and air.'

Johnny lifted the fan from the box, and very carefully and gingerly opened it out on the desk. Suppose he should hurt one of the little Ladies while doing this! He quite trembled at the thought.

But the little Ladies were not hurt in the least.

There were two of them, and they smiled sweetly up at Johnny from out the lovely fan.

The fan was all silver and gold and rose and green. Beside the two graceful little Ladies, black-haired, rosy-lipped, in their pretty kimonos, were two little Japanese children one of whom carried a gay paper parasol and the other a great spinning top. The two Ladies and the children were standing in a Japanese garden with its tiny twisted pine trees and its winding paths. A rustic bridge spanned a quiet lake and beyond the bridge a road led straight to a house perched high on the hillside quite at the top of the fan.

'Good-evening,' said the Ladies, without waiting for an introduction. 'Won't you have a cup of tea?'

Johnny saw that the Ladies themselves were tea-drinking, so he politely accepted the cup handed him, and upon tasting it found the tea to be both delicious and sweet.

'I should explain why I am here,' began Johnny.

But the Ladies interrupted him with a smile and a shake of the head.

'If you knew how lonely we were lying in that box

with no one to speak to but ourselves, you wouldn't explain anything,' said they, stirring their tea and sipping and smiling again.

'But I want to ask something of you,' persisted Johnny, who was afraid he might have to spend the entire evening in tea-drinking and talk. 'I want to find an elephant and I thought you might be able to tell me where to go.'

'Yes,' nodded the little Ladies, still calmly stirring their tea. 'And why did you think we could tell you where to find an elephant, pray?'

'Because the White Swan in the Daffodil Shop told me you were bought at a store in the City where elephants might be found,' was Johnny's answer, short and to the point.

'That is quite true,' agreed the Ladies, looking sideways at Johnny with their almond-shaped eyes and smiling their neat, sweet little smiles. 'There were many elephants in our Store, large ones and small ones and middle-sized ones, too. Why, we thought no more of elephants than Grandma would of a fly. But you want to know where the Store is, don't you, and the name, too, no doubt?'

'Yes, I do,' answered Johnny. 'I want this elephant for a little boy. Why, you must know him — Jim.'

'Yes,' smiled the little Ladies, 'we know Jim.'

Nothing seemed to surprise them. They seemed to think an elephant a most natural plaything for a little boy. They did not ask a single question, but went on to tell Johnny exactly what he wanted to know.

'The name of the big Store in the City where we were bought is Van Dyne's,' said one little Lady.

'And it stands just across the way from where Uncle Charles goes every day,' said the other.

'We had often seen Uncle Charles before, going in and out over the way, and always thought him a most pleasant gentleman,' went on the little Ladies, smiling at Johnny Ping Wing. 'We were lying in the window of the Store the afternoon Uncle Charles bought us. We saw him come out of his door and cross the street and stand looking in at us for a long, long while. Then he came into the Store and bought us and carried us home in his pocket. We found it a comfortable way to travel. That is the

way you can go into the City, in Uncle Charles's pocket, as easily as not, and just hop out and run over the street to our Store.'

Johnny was beaming with pleasure. It all seemed easy and simple to him now. He knew the name of the Store. He knew how to reach it, too. If he was not quite sure how he would take the elephant home to Jim, still Johnny was not worrying about it just then.

'It will all work out,' said he to himself.

Aloud he began to thank the little Ladies and to bid them good-night. But he found they had been making other plans and had no wish to let him go.

They were looking up at the little house at the end of the winding road, and at last one of them said longingly,

'Would you mind staying here a little while with the children while we go up the road to call on a friend?'

'Not at all,' answered Johnny politely.

What else could he say when the little Ladies had been so kind to him? But he wished with all his

heart that he knew what time it was and how late Grandma usually came up to bed.

'Oh, thank you,' said the little Ladies, smiling their sweetest. 'The children will behave nicely, we are sure. The little boy is named Dragonfly and the little girl is called Hollyhock. They will amuse themselves and we will be back shortly, never fear.'

Off went the two little Ladies, stepping daintily in their wooden shoes, over the rustic bridge, up the winding path, and in at the door of the house on the hillside at the very top of the fan.

The children did amuse themselves without any help from Johnny Ping Wing. Little Dragonfly darted hither and thither like his namesake, spinning his colored top. Pretty Hollyhock, well named in her green kimono and paper parasol of softest rose, tripped daintily to and fro. They were good children and patient, for moment after moment passed and still the little Ladies did not return. Johnny felt worried. Surely it was almost time for Grandma to come up to bed.

Johnny felt more and more troubled as the mo-

ments passed. He almost would have run back to Jim's room and left the fan open on the desk if he had not promised the two little Ladies that he would not leave the children alone.

The children were growing restless, too. Little Dragonfly darted farther and farther away with his top. At last, as he spun his toy, with a great humming noise, it went over the top of the fan, quite out of sight. Without a moment's pause, Dragonfly darted after it. Over the top he went and the next moment Johnny Ping Wing heard a loud watery splash! Before Johnny could stop her, pretty Hollyhock ran swiftly after the little boy. And then there came a second loud splash!

Johnny Ping Wing was so frightened he could scarcely move. What had happened to these children who had been left in his care? What would he see on the other side of the fan?

Trembling, he turned the fan over. A great golden moon shone out at him through a pine bough. A sheet of silver water glistened in its light. Among tall reeds stood a silver Crane, who at sight of Johnny's frightened face put his long bill down into

the water and pulled out little Dragonfly by the back of his coat.

'Don't be frightened,' said the Crane kindly. 'He falls in almost every day. Here is Hollyhock, too. Not hurt at all!'

'The Ladies have gone calling,' gasped Johnny. 'I do wish they would come home.'

'They are always out calling,' answered the Crane. 'I'll bring them back for you.'

With his long bill he knocked on the fan and cried, 'Tea-time! Tea-time!'

Out of the house hurried the little Ladies. Johnny could hear their wooden shoes tripping down the path.

Then the Crane picked up Dragonfly and Hollyhock and tumbled them one by one over the side of the fan.

'Here are your children,' he called to the Ladies.

And to Johnny he said, 'Now you run home as fast as you can!'

But Johnny didn't — not at the moment. He had to tidy the desk before he left, and in great haste, too.

Without a word to the Ladies, though he felt dreadfully impolite, he shut the fan. He put the cover on the box. He slipped it back into the pigeon-hole.

And just in time.

For in walked Grandma, and it is a mercy she didn't catch sight of Johnny hiding, in the fifth pigeon-hole, which happened to be empty, lucky for him.

'I am worn out,' said Johnny, when at last he was able to crawl back to his own nail on the wall. 'I don't believe even an elephant would tire me as those little Ladies did. Well, I am off in the morning in Uncle Charles's pocket, so now I must go to sleep.'

CHAPTER VII

VAN DYNE'S GREAT STORE

THE early morning sun shone in at the window and woke Johnny Ping Wing. Jim lay fast asleep, his head tucked under the pillow as a chicken puts its head under its mother's wing.

Down from his nail, without a sound, scrambled Johnny and crept on tiptoe over to the play-room door.

Just across the sill crouched the Gray Flannel Elephant, and even at this early hour his shoe-button eyes were wide awake and bright.

'I lie here to see that no harm comes to Jim,' whispered the Elephant, with a friendly wave of his

trunk. 'What are you doing up so early, Johnny Ping Wing?'

'I am going to the City this morning in Uncle Charles's pocket,' answered Johnny, with his mouth close to the Elephant's ear, 'and I hope to bring home a real live elephant with me. I have seen the little Ladies on Grandma's Japanese fan. I spent last evening with them and they told me just what I wanted to know.'

'I heard you coming home,' said the Elephant. 'You were very late, I thought.'

'It wasn't my fault,' answered Johnny. 'I will tell you about that some other time. But I learned that the Japanese fan was bought in a store across the way from where Uncle Charles goes every day, and there are plenty of elephants in the Store for me to choose from, so the little Ladies say.'

'Good luck, then,' answered the Elephant with a brave, bright smile. 'Be sure you pick out a handsome one for Jim. I shan't be jealous.'

Johnny knew he was thinking of his own poor thin trunk and long-lost tail, and he thought that the Gray Flannel Elephant was behaving in a truly noble way.

But there was no time to tell him so. At any moment now some one might come walking into Jim's room.

Downstairs scurried Johnny. In the hall hung Uncle Charles's light overcoat, and with very little trouble Johnny was able to hide himself in the deep pocket on the right-hand side.

Then Johnny waited. He had plenty of time to think as he lay there, and like many people with too much time on their hands, Johnny began to worry and fret.

'Suppose Uncle Charles puts his hand in his pocket,' thought Johnny, 'and finds me here. Suppose I get lost in the City and there is no Uncle Charles to take me home again. Suppose the elephants' — and here Johnny began to tremble — 'suppose the elephants eat me.'

But now Johnny Ping Wing gave himself a shake.

'Bother "suppose"!' said sensible Johnny Ping Wing. 'I shan't suppose any more. I'll listen.'

So Johnny listened.

He heard Matilda, the maid, come heavily down the stairs and begin a rattling of pots and pans in

the kitchen. He heard Jim's mother run quickly down the stairs. Grandma followed slowly, taking her time. The Mayor walked down to breakfast in a dignified way.

Thought Johnny proudly, 'He walks just as a Mayor should.'

Uncle Charles was late. He had been talking to Jim and he forgot that he had to catch a train. He had time for only a hurried cup of coffee and a roll. He slipped into his overcoat, snatched his hat from its peg, and was off down the street, buttoning his coat as he ran.

Johnny was delighted. He liked the hurry and bustle. He liked to be jolted and bounced.

'I am a real traveler,' thought Johnny. 'My journey has begun.'

He longed to climb up and peep over the edge of Uncle Charles's pocket, but he knew that would never do.

'I don't care,' said Johnny Ping Wing. 'I can tell what is going on even if I can't see.'

Uncle Charles sped down the street, past the Daffodil Shop, to the station. As he reached the

platform the train, puffing and hooting, pulled slowly out, but Uncle Charles sprang on the step of the very last car so neatly that Johnny Ping Wing wanted to clap his hands and shout.

All the way into the City, Johnny lay still in Uncle Charles's pocket. When he left the train, Uncle Charles rode on another car and then on the bus.

Johnny knew all this because he heard Uncle Charles tell a man on the train just how he went into the City every day.

At last Uncle Charles left the bus and walked steadily along a side street, and then Johnny Ping Wing permitted himself a peep over the edge of the overcoat pocket.

'How shall I know the right shop unless I look?' said Johnny.

True enough! How should he?

The sight of the City street almost took Johnny's breath away. It was not at all like the street to be seen from the window of the Daffodil Shop.

Not a tree, not a blade of grass, not a bird. Two rows of tall buildings set close together with not an

inch between. Crowds of people, all in a hurry, pushing and jostling one another along. Automobiles, hundreds of them, rolling swiftly in one direction, stopping only when a tall blue-coated figure at the corner blew a whistle and held up his hand. Johnny could scarcely see across the street, the automobiles came so fast.

But at last there was a lull. The cars stopped at the corner, Uncle Charles turned into a wide doorway, and at that moment Johnny caught sight of his Store just over the way.

He knew it because in the window he saw a great screen all silver and black and gold and green, very much like Grandma's Japanese fan. And on the screen in a silver pool stood a tall golden Crane.

The Crane made Johnny feel at home in a trice.

'This Crane must be brother to the Crane on Grandma's fan,' thought Johnny, 'though this one is very much larger than the one at home. He is older, perhaps. Anyway, here I go!'

Out of Uncle Charles's pocket slipped Johnny. He fell on the sidewalk in a heap. He picked himself up, twitched his pigtail in place, and darted

across the street, while Uncle Charles calmly walked into his office building, took the elevator to the seventh floor, and never dreamed for a moment that he had just parted from Johnny Ping Wing.

Once safely over the street, Johnny ran swiftly into the Store and hid himself behind a tall Chinese vase.

'If people should see me, what would they think?' said Johnny to himself as he dusted off his coat and straightened his hat. 'No one would ever take me for a cat or a dog.'

This was true. No one would. And Johnny did well to be careful as he peeped out from behind his vase into Van Dyne's Great Store.

It was a large, dim, beautiful room that Johnny saw, heavy with sweet odors of perfume and incense and spice. Bells high overhead swayed and tinkled and rang in a soft chime. On the floor beside Johnny were set tall bowls and vases of gay-colored china and carved stools and benches of dark polished wood. The walls were hung with beautiful rich rugs, and as far as Johnny's eye could see were cases and tables filled with lovely things.

'It is not a bit like Miss Martha's Daffodil Shop,'

thought Johnny. 'I wonder where the elephants are kept. I wish I had some one to ask.'

As if in answer to Johnny's wish, there was a thump on the floor at his side. There sat a little white ivory Monkey, with a mischievous face, who stretched out a tiny paw and laid it on Johnny's arm.

'Where did you come from?' asked the Monkey, 'and what is your name?'

'My name is Johnny Ping Wing,' answered Johnny, glad to see a friendly face, 'and I come from far away. I want an elephant for my little friend Jim, and that is why I am here.'

'Plenty of elephants,' replied the Monkey with a wave of his paw at the cases and tables roundabout. 'My name is Fritzi. That is what the men who walk around here call me, and I don't mind.'

'But where are the elephants?' asked Johnny again. 'I want to take one home with me to-night.'

'Sh-u-s-h!' hissed Fritzi sharply. 'Here comes a man.'

Johnny shrank back out of sight behind his Chinese vase and peeped with one black bright eye.

Down the Store aisle walked a young man glanc-

ing about him as he came. He was one of the many salesmen in Van Dyne's Great Store, but this Johnny did not learn until by and by.

'Suppose he sees me,' thought Johnny in terror.

He didn't see Johnny, but he picked Fritzi up from off the floor.

'Here is Fritzi on the floor again,' said he to another young man strolling by. 'I never knew anything like that Monkey for rolling out of his place.'

And he set Fritzi back on a table between a brass flower bowl and a string of beautiful green beads.

Johnny began to feel tired and frightened. He didn't like those young men walking round. They had taken his friend Fritzi away from him, too.

A thud made him turn his head and there at his side sat Fritzi.

'Back again,' said Fritzi with a merry grin. 'That man picks me up three or four times a day. He won't be back here soon. What was it you were saying to me?'

'I want an elephant,' began Johnny Ping Wing all over again, 'a real live elephant to take home to a little boy named Jim.'

'Who is Jim?' asked Fritzi, making faces as he spoke at a huge Gray Stone Dragon who grimaced frightfully back at Fritzi from across the aisle. 'I can't stand that fellow. He is so ugly. Who is Jim? Tell me about him, do.'

So Johnny told all about Jim and his knee, and Uncle Charles, and the Daffodil Shop, and the Gray Flannel Elephant, and the Japanese fan.

But when he ended by saying again, 'And I want to take home a real live elephant to Jim to-night,' the little Monkey laid his paw again on Johnny's arm and sorrowfully shook his head.

'You haven't come to the right place, my boy!' said Fritzi. 'We haven't any real live elephants here. This is a Store, Van Dyne's Great Store. Where you want to go is the Zoo.'

Johnny felt ready to cry.

'But the little Ladies, the Japanese Ladies,' he faltered. 'They told me you had elephants here as thick as flies.'

Fritzi shrugged his shoulders and opened his eyes wide.

'So we have,' he answered. 'The little Ladies

were right. Only — these elephants are not alive.'

He grinned a wide, monkeyish grin. But when he looked into Johnny's downcast face, he leaned over and patted him on the arm.

'I will show you every elephant in the Store to-night,' said he, 'as soon as these men go home. We can't do anything while they are walking around. I think one is coming down the aisle now. You look tired to death, too. Creep into this vase and go to sleep and I will call you when the Store is quiet to ——'

A young man stooped and picked up Fritzi from the floor. Luckily Johnny was out of sight.

'Fritzi again,' said the young man. 'We will have to lock him in a case, I think.'

And he set Fritzi down hard on the table in his place.

Into the Chinese vase crept Johnny. He was tired. His trip had worn him out. He was too tired even to think about elephants. He was too tired to do anything but sleep.

He was wakened by some one pulling at the cord

on his hat. He opened his eyes and there, above him, on the edge of the Chinese vase, sat Fritzi, grinning down at him.

'Everybody has gone home,' said Fritzi, 'except the night watchman and he is up on the top floor now. I have all the elephants gathered together and they are going to march past here for you to see.'

The procession began with two tiny elephants, made of glass, with ruby eyes, who were meant to hang upon a watch-chain, so Fritzi said. The elephants were arranged according to size. They grew larger and larger until the end of the line was reached with two enormous black ebony elephants with glistening tusks of purest ivory.

There were elephants of teakwood, of ivory, of jade. They were black, they were green, they were snowy white or crystal clear. Most of them were solemn and dignified, some of them were very old. There were a few frisky babies who curled a trunk at Johnny as they passed and looked him gayly in the eye. They were all good-natured and agreeable, so far as Johnny could see, and they swung slowly by, so that he might have a good look at them and

feel perfectly sure that there was not a live elephant there.

'Now do you see?' said Fritzi, as the last big elephant lumbered past. 'They aren't any more alive than the Gray Flannel Elephant you told me about. You will have to go to the Zoo. I know it. You will have to go to the Zoo.'

Johnny nodded. He saw that Fritzi was right. He would have to go to the Zoo. But this did not daunt him, for he was refreshed by his nap and ready for anything now.

'Where is the Zoo?' he asked boldly. 'I have come so far I shan't go home without a real elephant now.'

Fritzi shook his head.

'I don't know,' said he carelessly. 'Ask some of the others in the Store. They will tell you.'

And leaving Johnny's side he sprang halfway up the stairs, leaped lightly upon a chime of bells hanging from the ceiling, and swung there by his tail, clashing the bells and chattering and making a fearful din.

Johnny was so surprised at this behavior that he simply stood and stared at Fritzi, not knowing what to think. Had his friend deserted him? Would he help him no more? Didn't he really care whether Johnny ever found a real live elephant for Jim?

'Come here, young man!' called a deep voice from the window. 'Come here!'

It was the great golden Crane on the screen, standing on one leg, snapping his long bill, and calling Johnny to come to his side.

'That is just like a Monkey,' said the Crane to Johnny as he climbed into the window and made a

respectful bow. 'They can't do any one thing very long, you know. Fritzi told the whole Store about you and Jim while you were asleep, and I called you to say that I know the way to the Zoo.'

'How kind you are,' answered Johnny, touched by the old Crane's thought, and still wondering why Fritzi had acted so. 'Is it far to the Zoo? Will it take me long to go?'

'No, no,' snapped the Crane, ruffling his feathers impatiently. 'Walk to the corner, turn to the left, and go straight up the Avenue until you come to the Park. Then wander round the Park, keeping to the right, and you will reach the Zoo.'

'Thank you,' replied Johnny, with another polite bow. 'I shall find it without any trouble, I know. And can you tell me whether there is a real live elephant at the Zoo?'

He asked this question anxiously. He had been so disappointed not to find one here in Van Dyne's Great Store.

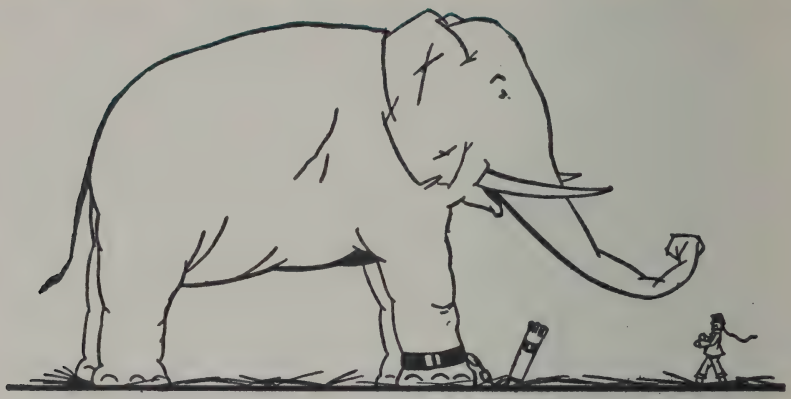
'Yes, one,' answered the Crane, 'very large and very old now. Hadn't you better go before the night watchman comes down? There is a loose window

here that I can open with my bill and I will toss you out, if you like.'

Johnny looked around to say good-bye to Fritzi. But Fritzi was busy making horrible faces at the Gray Stone Dragon and was not to be disturbed.

The Crane lifted Johnny high, high in the air. A push with his bill and down fell Johnny in a heap on the pavement out in front of Van Dyne's Great Store.

'Anyhow, I am on my way to the Zoo,' thought Johnny Ping Wing as he picked himself up and started down the street.



CHAPTER VIII

JEWEL OF THE ZOO

JOHNNY PING WING toddled up the broad Avenue, holding his head high and swinging his pigtail proudly as he went. He kept close to the shop fronts so that he would not be easily seen. But the street was not so crowded at that hour — dinner-time, the shops closed, business over for the day.

As he pattered along, Johnny talked happily to himself, forgetting the people and the passing automobiles.

'I shall soon see a real live elephant,' said Johnny, 'and when I explain to him about Jim and his knee, I feel sure he will be glad to come straight home with

me. I shall speak to him, too, about eating peanuts. We won't have any nonsense about that. If a boy or girl gives him peanuts to eat, well and good. Otherwise it simply isn't done. I shall speak firmly, and, above all things, I shall not be afraid.'

Johnny hurried over the ground and in a surprisingly short time saw the waving tree-tops of the Park and knew that he was not far from the Zoo.

Once in the Park, Johnny ran gayly over the grass and in and out among the bushes and trees. It was twilight now and there was small danger of being seen.

The birds in the Park were going to bed. They twittered and chirped and made a pleasant, peaceful sound, Johnny thought.

He was going over in his mind what he would say to the elephant and how he would tell him all about Jim, when down from a tree-trunk darted a little gray figure who boldly set his teeth in the gay yellow trousers and tried to take a bite from Johnny's leg.

It was a Squirrel, a gray Squirrel, who made his home in a tree in the Park and who loved to eat peanuts above all things in the world. And though

Johnny had never seen a Squirrel before, he knew by the glitter in the Squirrel's eye and the flash of his sharp white teeth that now, if ever, he must run for his life.

With a twitch and a jerk he broke away from the Squirrel and skimmed over the grass at such a pace that his long black pigtail stood straight out behind.

It was a great race and no one there to see. On ran Johnny and the Squirrel ran, too. Johnny's eyes popped in his head. His breath came quick and

fast. It seemed to him that the Squirrel drew nearer with every step.

'I will run zigzag,' thought Johnny. 'I may lose him that way.'

So Johnny ran zigzag, in and out among the bushes, round and round the tree-trunks, now darting across a path and back again, only to circle round a bench and then on again as fast as he could go.

But the Squirrel ran zigzag, too. He followed Johnny's every twist and turn.

Johnny's courage began to fail him.

'Suppose he catches me,' thought he. 'Then I never can take the elephant home to Jim. But he won't catch me,' said Johnny, gritting his teeth. 'I'll play him a trick.'

And this is the trick Johnny Ping Wing played:

He ran faster than ever, so fast that the wind whistled through his blue silk coat. Of course the Squirrel ran faster, too. And just as they were dashing along, helter-skelter, pell-mell, under a bush darted Johnny and crouched down among the thick green leaves. On went the Squirrel, on and

on and on. He was running so madly he didn't even miss Johnny Ping Wing.

Now, no sooner had the Squirrel passed the bush and turned the corner than Johnny Ping Wing ran off the opposite way. He ran and he ran, fearing every moment that he would hear the Squirrel again at his heels. By and by he came to a driveway, and over the driveway was a walk with benches set out here and there.

At sight of the benches, quite suddenly Johnny Ping Wing's legs gave out. He couldn't run another step. Of that he was sure. So up on one of the benches he scrambled and sat himself down with his back against the arm.

For a long time Johnny Ping Wing sat still and panted, trying to get his breath. He couldn't even think.

Then he listened. It was quiet. Not a sound of the Squirrel. It was quiet everywhere.

'What an escape!' thought Johnny. 'I might have been caught. What a fright I've had! But Jim is worth it all.'

Thinking of Jim, Johnny thought of the Zoo. His

legs were rested, so he crept down from the bench and began to walk.

He walked and walked and walked. He walked until he felt he couldn't put one foot in front of the other. And still no Zoo.

'There are nothing but trees,' said weary Johnny; 'trees and a path. I don't think I can walk another step. I will just go round this corner.'

And there, round the corner, before him, he saw a house, and another, and another, and he knew that at last he had found the Zoo, that he had come to the houses where the animals live.

'But how shall I find the Elephant's house?' asked Johnny of himself, limping up to one of the houses and staring wistfully at the big front door. 'Shall I just walk in or ring the bell and ask?'

He thought for a moment.

'I might wake the whole Zoo if I ring the bell,' decided Johnny. 'I will just walk in.'

But the front door was locked, of course, in the middle of the night, as you might guess, and in his secret heart Johnny Ping Wing was glad.

'I am in no mood to talk to an elephant,' said

Johnny. 'I am very tired and hot. In the morning, when I am rested, I shall be able to explain to him about Jim, and no doubt he will be glad to go home with me and live in Jim's back garden. Now I am going to sleep.'

Curling himself under a bush, weary little Johnny Ping Wing shut his eyes and went to sleep.

When he woke in the morning, he was so bewildered he couldn't think where in the world he was.

A most dreadful roaring and squealing was going on all roundabout. The doors of the animal houses were open wide, and Johnny could see that each house had cages built outside like a porch. In the cages were animals walking up and down, up and down, and roaring as they walked. From cage to cage went a man. He had a basket filled with pieces of meat and on a long fork he thrust meat into every cage.

'Breakfast,' thought Johnny.

And he watched the animals roar and lash their tails until their meat was thrown to them, when they fell upon it without another sound.

Johnny waited until the man had gone away. He waited, too, until the great striped beast in the nearest cage had finished his meal and sat licking his whiskers and purring like a cat.

Then Johnny bravely climbed to the narrow ledge outside the bars of the cage and, making his best bow, spoke politely to the great creature inside.

'Excuse me,' said Johnny, trembling in spite of his bold front and hoping he was well out of reach of the creature's sharp claws, 'but can you tell me where I will find the Elephant to-day?'

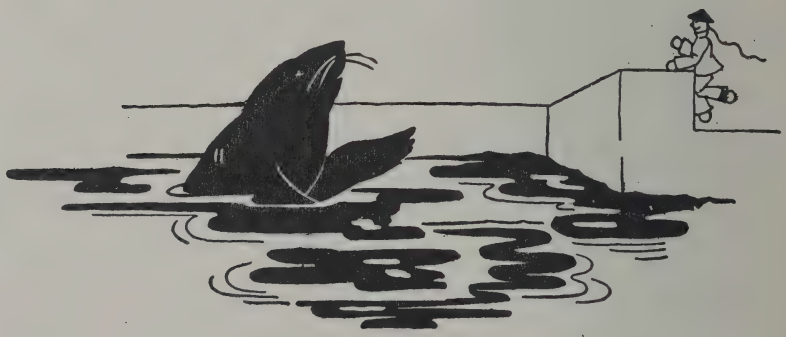
The Tiger licked his lips and stared straight out over Johnny's head.

'Where he was the day before and the day before that and the day before that,' he answered, still staring just as if Johnny wasn't there.

'And where is that?' asked Johnny, feeling very uncomfortable and wishing he hadn't come. 'Is it near by?'

To this the Tiger made no answer at all. He stared and stared and his deep-set eyes seemed to burn in his head. Johnny wondered what he was looking at, for across the way there were only trees.

Silently Johnny slipped down from the Tiger's cage. He passed the next cage without speaking. In it a tawny Lion and Lioness were slowly pacing, pacing up and down. Johnny was afraid of them.



He liked better the great pool of water in which the Sea-Lions swam and sported or basked upon the rocks. He stood watching them dive and bark and clap their long flippers, and when a sleek brown Sea-Lion crept on a rock near Johnny and stretched in the sun, Johnny mustered up courage and spoke.

'Can you tell me where the Elephant is?' he asked, hoping the Sea-Lion would do something more than stare.

'Certainly, certainly,' answered the Sea-Lion, politely and with no surprise. 'Do you see those tall

spotted animals with very long necks? They are the Giraffes. Go past their cage. Then come the Monkeys. Don't bother with them, even if they call to you. Go past their cage. Then come the Kangaroos. They are timid. Don't frighten them, and don't jump if they hop. And then comes the Elephant. We have only one. He is very old, and we are all as fond and proud of him as we can be. Glad to have helped you,' added the Sea-Lion as Johnny murmured his thanks.

Johnny followed the line of march mapped out by the Sea-Lion.

He looked in at the Giraffes, with their long necks and little heads, and passed by.

The Monkeys chattered and screamed at him, but Johnny shook his head.

'I wonder whether they know Fritzi,' thought he. But he didn't stop to ask.

The Kangaroos had turned their backs. They didn't see Johnny at all, and he didn't stop to look at them, he was in such a hurry to see the Elephant and talk to him about Jim.

But when he turned the corner and spied the Ele-

phant standing in his cage, Johnny Ping Wing lay down flat on the grass and shut his eyes.

'The Elephant! So that is the Elephant? It can't be!' thought Johnny Ping, his head in a perfect whirl.

He opened one eye and stole a look at the Elephant. Yes, there was his long trunk, his great flapping ears, his shining white tusks, his thin little tail.

'He is an Elephant,' thought Johnny, leaning up on one elbow. 'But what an Elephant! He is one million times larger than the Gray Flannel Elephant or any Elephant in Van Dyne's Great Store. How could I take him home with me? How could he go in Jim's back garden? Oh me! Oh me!'

Johnny lay flat on the ground again and wrinkled up his face almost as if he were going to cry.

But he stayed there for only a moment and then he jumped to his feet.

'He has had his breakfast,' thought Johnny, mustering up a smile, though in his heart he was dreadfully afraid, 'so he won't be hungry and want to eat me — perhaps. I shall just go up and talk to him, and see what he has to say.'

On the ledge of the Elephant's cage stood Johnny Ping Wing, and inside the cage the great old Elephant named Jewel stood looking down at him.

In spite of his brave words, Johnny was trembling until his peanuts rattled aloud in their shells. Standing so close to that huge form, with its wrinkled skin and strange long trunk, its flopping ears and little eyes and big, big feet, every word of his speech went out of Johnny's head. He stammered and shook, but at last he spoke.

'I — I — I hope you don't like peanuts. I don't want to be eaten until I have told you all about Jim.'

Now the Elephant Jewel was old and gentle and wise.

He swayed on his feet for a moment before answering Johnny and then he said:

'I don't eat many peanuts nowadays. I am so old they don't agree with me. Come in, and tell me all about Jim.'

Into the cage through the stout iron bars hopped Johnny and settled himself in the straw that covered the floor.

'Shall I begin at the beginning?' he eagerly

asked. 'Shall I tell you every single thing about Jim?'

'Every single thing,' answered Jewel, still swaying and eyeing Johnny Ping Wing. 'And all about yourself too.'

So Johnny told — told Jewel everything.

And Jewel laughed an elephant laugh when he heard about the little boy with a tantrum, and he smiled an elephant smile when he learned that Jim's knee was getting well. He nodded over the Flower Girl and the little Japanese Ladies, he shook his head over the greedy Squirrel in the Park, and he sighed when he heard about the Gray Flannel Elephant and his poor thin trunk and his long-lost tail.

'We are all growing old,'murmured the Elephant softly, 'all growing old and feeble together.'

He looked troubled when Johnny told him of the Tiger, of how he didn't answer, but only stared.

'His heart is breaking,' Jewel told Johnny gently, 'because he must live here in a cage instead of going free. When he stares, he is seeing the Jungle where he was born and lived. He sees the trees and the

waving grass and the pool of water where the animals went to drink. Poor fellow!'

And Jewel rocked slowly to and fro and stared a little himself.

'But what are we going to do about Jim?' asked Jewel when he had done thinking and was looking down at Johnny Ping Wing again. 'Are you sure it is a real live elephant he wants? Won't anything else do?'

Johnny shook his head. No, nothing else would do, he was sure. But equally well he knew that he could never take Jewel or any other elephant home with him to Jim's back garden.

'I couldn't go home with you,' said Jewel, as if he read Johnny's thoughts, 'even if I could get out of this cage, which I can't. An Elephant couldn't live in a little boy's back garden. You can see that for yourself. But we must fix it up some way. We mustn't disappoint Jim.'

Johnny fastened his eyes anxiously on Jewel as the old Elephant swayed and rocked and thought. He did hope that Jewel would find a way out, but he didn't see how he could.

'If I could go and pay Jim a visit,' Jewel was saying softly, half to himself; 'just call on him, as it were, and make friends. Would that satisfy him, do you think, Johnny Ping Wing?'

Johnny jumped to his feet, his face a-smile.

'I know it would, I know it would,' said he. 'He wants to see you lift your feet and curl your trunk. He wants to feel your skin, he says.'

'I know, I know,' said Jewel patiently, and yet with a certain pride. 'I have known many little boys in my day. But, Johnny, I am old. I am nearly a hundred years old. And I can't get out of this cage. Now, what am I to do, I wonder, for Jim?'

Johnny held his breath while Jewel rocked and swayed and thought again. One moment he said to himself, 'Jewel will fix it somehow, I know.' And the next moment he was thinking, 'But I don't see how he can.'

Suddenly Jewel gave a little snort. It frightened Johnny so that he jumped three inches into the air.

'I have it!' exclaimed Jewel with a triumphant curl of his trunk. 'The Circus! The Circus Elephant! Why didn't I think of that before?'

'The Circus?' faltered Johnny. 'I don't know what the Circus is.'

'Well, Jim does,' said Jewel, with another elephant laugh. 'I can't stop to tell you about it now. But this is Circus time, Johnny, Springtime, the first of May. All you have to do is to get to the Circus somehow and tell the biggest Elephant, Rajah, that his old friend Jewel sent you to him. Tell him all about Jim, and unless Rajah isn't the same Elephant who used to be my friend, he will know what to do and he will do it.'

Johnny Ping Wing felt as gay as a bird. He wanted to dance and sing and clap his hands. He wanted, too, to ask Jewel a hundred questions about the Circus, and where it was, and what he should say to Rajah when they met.

But instead of doing all that, he fell back on the straw as stiff as a poker and without a sign of life.

For a tall Keeper stood before the cage. With one hand he reached in to pat Jewel's trunk. With the other he picked up Johnny Ping Wing.

'Did somebody throw that little toy in to you?' he asked old Jewel, rubbing and slapping his trunk as

if he were fond of the great old beast. 'You don't want it, do you? I will take it home to my little girl.'

And into the Keeper's pocket, head-first, went Johnny Ping Wing, with not time for even a farewell nod or blink or glance from Jewel.

CHAPTER IX

THE KEEPER'S LITTLE GIRL

JOHNNY PING WING lay in the Keeper's pocket and wondered where he was going next.

'It is a great thing to go traveling,' said Johnny. 'How much I have seen and learned since I left the Daffodil Shop! I wonder what I ought to do next. I must meet Jewel's friend Rajah somehow, but if I jump out of the Keeper's pocket now, I won't know where to go. I had better lie still. I do hope the Keeper's little girl is a pleasant child.'

She was a pleasant child, the Keeper's little girl. Johnny agreed to this when the Keeper pulled him

out of his pocket and placed him in the little girl's outstretched hands.

Her name was Christy. Her eyes were a twinkling blue, her hair curled every which-way, and it was much easier for her to skip than to walk.

'A dolly for me? From old Jewel's cage? What is his name? I think he is beautiful.'

And Christy first hugged Johnny Ping Wing and then gave him a very gentle little kiss.

It was Johnny Ping Wing's first kiss. Miss Martha Pretty hadn't thought of such a thing, and Jim, being a boy, never kissed any one but his mother and grandmother, and sometimes an aunt or a cousin when she came to call.

But Johnny didn't mind Christy's kiss at all. In fact, he rather liked it. He didn't want to push her away, nor wipe off his mouth, nor make a face, as some little boys have been known to do. No, he felt that warm-hearted Christy liked him, and in turn he liked Christy very much indeed.

'Isn't he beautiful?' asked Christy again. 'See his gold buttons! Has he a name? Look at his pigtail so long and black!'

And Christy smiled down at Johnny Ping Wing, who at that moment liked Christy better and better, for Johnny was proud of his pigtail, as we know.

'His name is Little John Chinaman,' said Christy's father. 'And Jewel sent him to you with his compliments. Why he didn't eat the little fellow for breakfast, I don't know. And Jewel hopes, too, that you won't stay away so long visiting that you will forget him. Jewel told me to tell you all that.'

'Why, I wouldn't forget Jewel for the world,' said Christy reproachfully. 'How could he think such a thing? And I am only going to stay three days with Aunt Christine. Did you tell him that? I can take Little John Chinaman with me, can't I? I will go and pack him now. Jewel had better not eat him. He is too good to eat, I think.'

Christy brought out a small blue leather bag, and in it she stood Johnny Ping Wing. His head peeped above the edge, and he could look all round and see the world.

'He fits! He just fits!' exclaimed Christy. 'I can carry him to Aunt Christine's in that very bag. I have a pink handkerchief and five pennies and room

for three candies in the bag besides Little John Chinaman. And we will all go to Aunt Christine's to-morrow, as soon as I wake up.'

Johnny listened eagerly to every word Christy had to say.

'Perhaps Aunt Christine lives near Jim, for all I know,' thought he.

'To-morrow Mother will take us to Aunt Christine's and leave us there,' Christy was saying. 'We will stay there three days and have a good time every minute, I know. My Uncle Will is a baker and my Cousin William drives the baker's cart. He goes all round the country and leaves cake and bread and pies at every one's house. I will go with him and take you, too, and we will sit in the cart and eat cakes together. Cousin William always gives me all the cakes I want.'

This sounded pleasant to Johnny. He was thinking, too, 'Perhaps I shall catch a glimpse of Jim.'

But he pricked up his ears at what Christy had to say next.

'What do you think we are going to do the second day we are there?' Christy was asking. 'I will tell

you, for you will never guess. We are going to the Circus, in my Aunt Christine's own town. It will be there one day. Did you ever hear of the Circus? It is the finest thing you can see. Every one will go, and we are going, too. I will take you with me in my little bag. What is the matter, Little John Chinaman? Can't you stand up straight?'

For in his excitement and joy, Johnny Ping Wing had fallen down flat upon his back.

The Circus! Was it really true? Was he to go to the Circus with Christy? Instead of a long and weary search, was he to be carried straight to the Circus in Christy's little blue leather bag?

It was too good to be true. Johnny wished Christy would hang him upon a nail so that he might whirl and dance and prance to show his joy.

'There will be clowns and horses and chariot races and little trick dogs. There will be lions and tigers and elephants, too. All kinds of animals will be there. There will be people swinging on the trapeze, and girls in white who will ride on horses and jump through hoops, and a great parade of everybody all around the ring.'

Christy went on and on about the Circus, telling all that she had heard.

But Johnny was thinking of just one thing.

'I must see Rajah at the Circus and tell him about Jim. I must see Rajah at the Circus and tell him about Jim.'

The next day Johnny traveled comfortably to Aunt Christine's in Christy's little blue leather bag. Christy and her mother walked hand in hand, while Johnny, in company with a fresh pink handkerchief, five pennies, and three peppermint drops, swung elegantly on Christy's other arm. They rode first on a train and next on a bus, far out into the country — so it seemed to Johnny — where he was glad to see grass and trees and flowers once more. He kept his eyes wide open, hoping he might have sight of Jim's mother or grandmother walking along the street, or catch a glimpse of the Mayor hastening down town to see a man.

But Johnny saw no familiar faces nor familiar streets. Once he spied a black cat on a doorstep and his heart leaped. For a moment he thought it was his old friend the Black Cat Door-Stop. But a

second glance showed a broad white vest on the stranger which the Black Cat Door-Stop did not own, and when the pussy lifted his voice to greet a passing friend, it did not sound at all like the Black Cat's shrill high bass.

But in spite of this, Johnny did not feel lonely. You simply couldn't be homesick when visiting Uncle Will and Aunt Christine. It made you smile only to look at them, they were so pleasant to see. They were both plump and agreeable, with rosy faces and comfortable laughs. They looked as if they spent their time delightfully in making cherry pies and jelly rolls and sugar buns, and in taking little girls and their toys to the Circus, too.

Cousin William was a slim young man who could drive a bakery cart with more skill than any one else in the world, so Christy whispered in Johnny Ping Wing's ear.

'He drives so fast that we don't keep any one waiting,' said Christy, 'and yet he drives so slowly that we never upset the cakes.'

Johnny was able to see for himself the next morning just how well Cousin William drove.

'We are going driving with the cart in the morning,' Christy told him, 'and to the Circus in the afternoon.'

The Bakery Cart was very gay, indeed. It was painted a bright orange with black lettering that told who they were and where they came from and also their wares.

Pies Cakes
Buns Rolls

might be read upon both sides of the covered cart. The gray horse who pulled the cart was both gentle and wise. He waited patiently before each door, he stepped carefully while on the way, and it was really surprising to see how swiftly he could clatter along when Cousin William shook the reins and clicked his tongue.

Within the cart, all nicely wrapped and packed in baskets, was such an array of good things that it was a pleasure simply to ride beside them, though of them you might have never a taste. Cinnamon buns and butter cakes, spice drops and chocolate bars, fruit tarts and apple pies, lay side by side, rich and sweet, fresh from the oven, and all but smoking hot. There were cookies and drop cakes, brown bread and white. The little cart was filled with fragrant odors when Christy and Johnny Ping Wing carefully climbed up and took the seat beside Cousin William in his neat white coat.

Off they drove down the street, round the corner, and over the hill. There Cousin William jumped from the cart, and, with his basket of samples, ran up the steps of this house and that, selling his wares

as he went. The gray horse walked or stood still as Cousin William commanded, and Christy and Johnny Ping Wing peeped out on either side of the way, both of them smiling for the mere pleasure of being there.

'Cousin William doesn't go into every house, explained Christy, between bites of a cooky, to Johnny Ping Wing. 'That would take him too long, of course. There are certain streets he drives on, where he knows people want our bread and cake. We are going to only one other town to-day, too, because of the Circus. We must be home in time for that. It is the little town just over the bridge, straight ahead.'

Johnny looked out the front of the cart and saw before him a bridge over which Cousin William presently drove the wise gray horse and on into the quiet streets of the town.

A great many people here seemed to like Cousin William's cake and bread and pies. He ran up and down the steps of houses, carrying in his basket filled with goodies, and coming back with his hands full of jingling coins.

The cart was growing empty now. Many of the baskets held only a few cakes or loaves; one or two of them held nothing at all.

William drove into a wide pleasant street and jumped from the cart, his basket in hand. The moment the cart turned the corner, the door of a house opened and a lady stepped out on the porch.

Johnny Ping Wing almost tumbled from off Christy's lap.

'It can't be!' gasped Johnny Ping Wing to himself. 'It can't be! But it is!'

Yes, it was. It was Jim's own mother who stood smiling there on the porch, waiting for Cousin William, with his basket of wares, to run up the steps.

'Have you a loaf of brown bread?' called Jim's mother. 'I want it for my little boy's luncheon to-day.'

'Yes, ma'am,' answered Cousin William with a smile, setting down his basket on the porch with a fine flourish. 'I saved a loaf for you because I knew you liked it specially for your little boy. And I brought you six fig bars like you told me, too, the next time we had them baked.'

'Thank you,' said Jim's mother; 'and will you surely be by to-morrow? I want to order a loaf of cake — an angel cake — the largest that you bake.'

'Yes, ma'am, I'll be by,' answered Cousin William, writing down the order for angel cake in a little book. 'But I am going home now because the Circus is in our town to-day and we are all going, my little cousin from the City, too. She is sitting down there in the cart.'

Jim's mother looked down and smiled and nodded at Christy, who smiled and nodded back.

What she would have said if she had seen Johnny Ping Wing I cannot guess. But Johnny at that moment let himself slip down on the seat between Christy and the side of the cart.

'I want dreadfully to run in and see Jim for a moment,' thought Johnny. 'But that would never do. I must see Rajah at the Circus to-day. Whatever happens, I must see Rajah first.'

He lay as still as a mouse, and in a moment he heard Cousin William step into the cart beside Christy, pick up the reins and jog off.

'That lady says the Circus is coming here to this

town to-morrow,' said Cousin William, slipping a honey cake into Christy's willing hand. 'She doesn't think her little boy will be able to go. He hurt his knee and only got up out of bed yesterday. He can't take more than a step or two, she says.'

Johnny gave a start that threw him off the seat onto the floor of the cart. He scarcely noticed when Christy picked him up and tenderly brushed him off. He was thinking so deeply that his narrow black eyes stared straight ahead and did not see the crumb of honey cake that Christy was pressing to his lips.

'So Jim is out of bed,' thought Johnny. 'How glad I am of that! I must see Rajah to-day and tell him he is going to Jim's town to-morrow. Some way he and Jim must meet.'

With these thoughts whirling round and round in his little peanut head, Johnny was driven home. He was wondering and planning and thinking so hard that for all he knew he might have been alone in the cart.

Once home and seated on the front-room table with his back against the lamp, he waited as patiently as he might until the moment came to start for the Circus.

CHAPTER X

AT THE CIRCUS

On their way to the Circus, Christy and Johnny Ping Wing were both more excited than they ever had been before in all their lives.

Christy's feet scarcely touched the ground. She hopped, she skipped, she pranced along, and if she had not been holding Aunt Christine's hand, she would have reached the Circus fully ten minutes before the rest of the party had even caught sight of the big white tent.

Johnny Ping Wing stood very straight in his blue leather bag hanging from Christy's arm. His black eyes stared in front of him, his tiny mouth still wore its curious little smile. But inside, Johnny Ping

Wing was all a-quiver. You might have heard his peanuts shake if you had had a mind to listen.

But no one was thinking of Johnny Ping Wing. All the grown people and all the little boys and girls who walked briskly along the street that afternoon could think of but one thing — the Circus they were so soon to see.

'There is the tent!' cried Christy, as she and Uncle Will and Aunt Christine and Cousin William and Johnny Ping Wing turned the corner and the great white tent, topped by a floating scarlet flag, came in sight. 'I can hear the lions roar. I think I hear music. Oh, hurry, do! We shall be late.'

And Christy, beginning to run, jerked and pulled at Aunt Christine's hand until Aunt Christine was almost running herself.

They were not late. Christy had plenty of time to settle herself in her seat and arrange Johnny Ping Wing comfortably in the bag on her lap.

Johnny's gleaming black eyes roved round and round, and it is safe to say that there was nothing that Johnny Ping Wing missed. He saw the huge tent, the roof and sides of which billowed and

flapped invitingly in the breeze. He couldn't begin to count the seats that rose to the very top of the tent, and that sometimes were not seats at all, but long planks of splintery wood. He saw the great sawdust ring, the ropes for the acrobats that swung from the very roof. He heard the band strike up a gay tune. Then a door at one end of the tent opened, and out came all the animals and the performers and began a Grand March around the Ring.

Johnny Ping Wing stood as straight as a soldier and watched for the Elephants and for nothing else. He scarcely saw the little Trick Dogs, with blue-ribbon bows and jingling bells, who ran merrily by, or the two funny Clowns, one thin and one fat, who made every one laugh with their antics and their jokes. There were men and women on horseback, gay in velvets and silks and fine feathers and lace. The golden chariots rumbled past, each driven by a splendid figure dressed in emerald-green or poppy-red or silver-white, with trappings to match on their spirited steeds. The Fat Lady and the Living Skeleton and a family of stout Midgets rode past, bowing and smiling on an open car.

Where were the Elephants? Johnny strained his eyes to see. There was so much passing that he grew quite dizzy, and he had to reckon, too, with a great many bounces and sudden squeezes from Christy, who was more happy and excited than words can tell.

'Here come the Camels!' called Christy, as the tall ungainly brown creatures swayed into view.

And behind the Camels lumbered the Elephants. Twenty-four of them! An endless line, it seemed to Johnny Ping Wing.

'Rajah! Rajah!' thought he, leaning forward on the side of Christy's bag. 'How ever shall I know which is Rajah? How ever shall I have a chance to speak to him, too?'

The Elephants walked in line, slow, ponderous, majestic, and each Elephant held in his trunk the tail of the Elephant who walked in front of him.

On they stepped nearer and nearer to where Johnny Ping Wing and Christy sat.

The leader was a huge, fine-looking Elephant, with a bright, rolling eye, perhaps the handsomest and certainly the largest of them all. His trunk

Jack Perkins

curled proudly, he stepped out bravely, he led his band with an air.

'Somehow I think that is Rajah,' said Johnny Ping Wing to himself. 'Didn't Jewel say he was the largest Circus Elephant of all?'

So he was not surprised when the fat Clown came running up to the Elephant and, holding out a large yellow banana, called,

'Here, Rajah! Here is a present for you! Stop, Rajah, stop!'

Of course Rajah stopped. And then began a bit of play in which every time Rajah's trunk reached out for the banana, the fat Clown hid it behind his back. At last Rajah with a quick twist of his trunk snatched the banana, and tucked the morsel, skin and all, neatly into his mouth. Then, wrapping his trunk round the fat Clown's waist, he carried him kicking and struggling round the ring, while the audience laughed and clapped and stamped their feet, and Johnny Ping Wing felt as proud as if he had done it all himself.

He watched Rajah every moment that he could after that. He found that he was a clever and gifted

Elephant, indeed. He could waltz, he could juggle, he could climb. And, most wonderful of all, with his four feet on a huge ball, could roll himself rapidly round and round the sawdust ring.

'He is a friend to be proud of,' thought Johnny, all in a glow, remembering the way old Jewel had spoken of him, and quite forgetting that as yet he did not know Rajah at all.

Johnny was so interested in Rajah that he couldn't enjoy the wonderful acrobats who climbed and leaped and swung on their high trapeze. Men and women did fancy riding and gracefully leaped through hoop after hoop, but it didn't compare in Johnny's mind with the least curl of Rajah's trunk.

But Christy didn't feel that way — not at all. She enjoyed everything; the last was always the best. She was sure that this was the finest Circus that ever had come to town.

'See that little brown Pony with the long wavy tail!' Christy would exclaim, jerking Aunt Christine's hand and squeezing Johnny Ping Wing. 'Oh, look at that man swinging on the bars! Would you like to be up there, Aunt Christine? How funny

the Clowns are, Cousin William! Don't you wish you could be a Clown?'

But it was when the chariot races began that Christy became so excited that Cousin William was forced to put his arm about her so that she might not jump quite out of her seat.

'The Green is mine,' said Christy when the race started.

Cousin William chose the Silver-White, which left the Poppy-Red chariot to Uncle Will and Aunt Christine.

The bell rang and the chariots started. Round and round the ring they swept. Now Silver-White was in the lead. Now Poppy-Red whirled round a corner and gained first place.

'The Green! The Green!' sang Christy under her breath, seizing Johnny Ping Wing by the cord in his hat and whirling him round and round.

For the Green Chariot, which twice had been left far behind, was now gaining inch by inch, and the Green Chariot was Christy's choice.

On swept the Green Chariot, on and on, and round and round whirled Johnny Ping Wing.

Faster, faster rolled the chariot wheels, louder grew the thunder of the horses' feet. Silver-White fell far behind! Poppy-Red and Emerald-Green were neck and neck! Until with a mighty swirl the Green Chariot swept far ahead, and the race was won!

At that instant Johnny Ping Wing, who had been twirling in a frenzy for the last moment or so, felt himself whirled out into the air by Christy's excited hand. Down, down he fell and lay in a heap in the sawdust on the edge of the Circus ring.

People all roundabout were shouting and calling and clapping their hands. Every one had been thrilled by the great chariot race.

But the Circus was over. The audience was hurrying into hats and coats. People were standing and moving out. Some were anxious to go home to dinner. Others meant to visit the side-shows of the Circus before they left.

Johnny Ping Wing, all covered with sawdust and his brain in a whirl, thought quickly.

'If I let Rajah out of my sight, I may never see him again. I must catch him before he leaves the ring.'

Nobody noticed the droll little yellow-and-blue figure who ran, his pigtail flapping, round the great ring to where the monstrous Elephant stood.

'How shall I make him look at me?' thought Johnny as he ran. 'If he steps on me, that's the end. If he is hungry, I haven't a chance. I shall just stand in front of him and wave my arms and shout.'

Now, Rajah was making ready to lead his line of Elephants out of the Circus ring to their cages in the rear. He had done this so many times and so well that the Elephant Trainer, Signor Rondonello, had gone to the other end of the line to keep the young Elephants there in place.

So Johnny stood forth in front of Rajah and shouted and waved his arms as he had planned.

'Don't eat me! Don't eat me!' called Johnny Ping Wing. 'Jewel sent me! Jewel sent me! Let me tell you about it, do!'

Then because he had no more breath, Johnny stood and looked up into Rajah's face while Rajah looked down into his.

They were the drollest pair that you might wish

to see. Rajah was as large an elephant as could be found, while Johnny Ping Wing was as small a fellow as ever ran about on two legs.

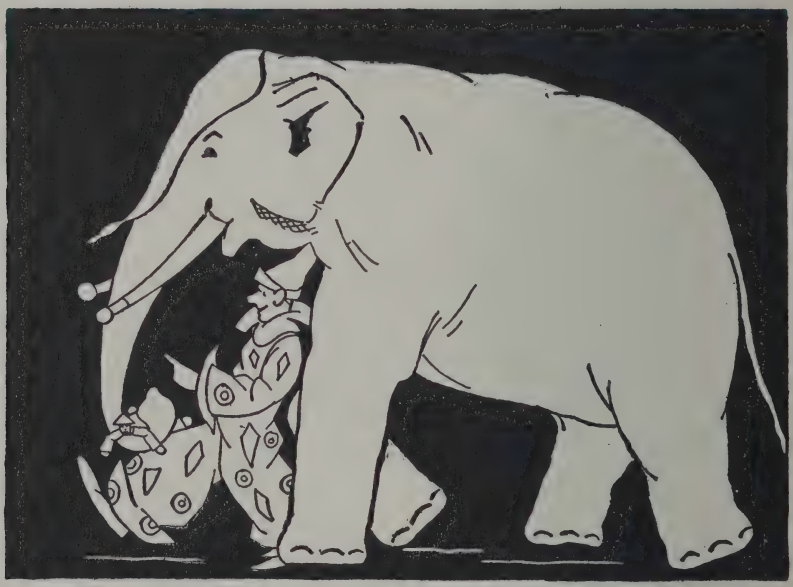
'Don't eat me! Don't eat me!' began Johnny again in a faint little voice when Rajah with a shake of the head bade him stop.

'I heard you,' said Rajah slowly and in a voice surprisingly soft for one so large. 'I shan't eat you. I don't want to. I don't think your coat and trousers would agree with me. So Jewel sent you, did he? Come up here and ride into my cage with me and tell me all about it when we have time.'

Rajah seized Johnny gently with the end of his long trunk and, curling him neatly out of sight, swayed from the Circus ring and tent and moved down toward a long row of cages before one of which he halted.

'Hide in the straw till I come,' said he, pushing Johnny in between the bars, 'and mind you keep on the edge. I wouldn't step on you for the world, but somehow my feet are so large.'

You may be sure Johnny Ping Wing sat himself down at the very tip-edge of Rajah's cage. But it



was not until the animals had had their supper and the Circus had quieted down for its short night that Johnny Ping Wing and Rajah were able to have any talk together at all.

'Now, tell me about Jewel and about everything else,' said Rajah.

So Johnny told. He told first about Jewel and next about Jim. Then he went back to the Daffodil Shop and began at the very beginning. There wasn't a single thing that Johnny Ping Wing left

out. No, not even the Black Cat Door-Stop and the chorus where he sang high bass.

When he had finished, Rajah laughed an elephant laugh and flapped his huge elephant ears.

'It is going to be as easy as easy can be,' said he, so confidently that Johnny felt that what he said was true. 'I am glad to do a favor for Jewel, and besides that I like the sound of your Jim. I am glad he is out of bed, even if he isn't able to walk. He shall look at me all he pleases and feel of me, too, if he likes. You just ride along with me in the Grand Parade around Town and you shall see what happens to your friend Jim.'

Johnny began to laugh for joy, but suddenly he stopped.

'How do you know you are going to see Jim?' he asked, his face all wrinkled with care. 'We are going to his town to-morrow, that I know. But his mother doesn't think he can go to the Circus. And how do we know that the Parade will pass his house?'

Rajah gave an impatient little snort that almost blew Johnny Ping Wing out of the cage.

'Didn't you tell me Jim's father was the Mayor?' he demanded. 'Well, we always pass the Mayor's house on our parade around Town. You ought to know that.'

Johnny felt so ashamed of his ignorance that he couldn't speak.

But Rajah didn't notice that anything was amiss. He had something more to say himself.

'Of course, Jim will be out in front of his house to see the Parade,' he went on, with a roguish twinkle in his eye. 'And I may play a little trick to-morrow, so be prepared for a surprise. I am very fond of surprises myself. I will take you right along with me, as I said. You can ride under my ear, perhaps, or on my trunk, until the Parade is started, and then you can come out and sit on my head.'

Johnny felt almost perfectly happy. There was only one thing that troubled him at all. It was Christy. He knew she felt badly at losing him. Perhaps she was crying even now.

But in ten minutes he had news of Christy that took every worry off his mind.

It was the Elephant in the next cage who called in to Rajah.

'Have you heard the news?' trumpeted the Elephant softly — that is, as softly as he could. 'The Camels have just passed the word along the line. They had it from the brown Trick Dog, the one who wears a very large blue bow. It seems a little girl lost some toy here at the Circus this afternoon. She was looking for it and crying so hard that she almost made the Lion cage start roaring. Some one she was with — she called him Cousin William — took her off to buy her a new doll. So I suppose she has stopped crying now.'

'Oh, I hope so,' thought Johnny. 'I hope Christy has the prettiest doll Cousin William can buy.'

But the Elephant was speaking again, and Johnny listened to what he had to say.

'It seems strange to me that little girl couldn't find her toy, whatever it was,' said the Elephant, trying to lower his voice to a whisper, 'and I believe that the shaggy old Camel with the long nose has eaten it. That is what I think about it. So there!'

Johnny Ping Wing and Rajah began to laugh.

'I don't think that is true, do you?' asked Rajah,

as Johnny shook his head. 'But, anyhow, you must go to sleep now, for the whole Circus must be up and off at four o'clock in the morning. That is the Circus time for traveling, you know.'

CHAPTER XI

THE GRAND PARADE

It was early in the morning, so early that the great yellow sun was only just getting out of bed. But the Circus was wide awake and ready to start on its journey into the next town, for four o'clock in the morning is traveling time for the Circus, as Rajah had said only the night before.

Johnny Ping Wing was wide awake, too, for this was to be the greatest day of his life. To-day, if all went well, he was to carry out his cherished plan. He was to bring a real live elephant to Jim's very door and, as it were, put a real live elephant into Jim's very hands.

So, of course, Johnny Ping Wing was up bright and early, and Rajah was awake and moving about his cage very early, too.

'We won't have to do a thing yet,' Rajah told Johnny as they rustled about in the straw. 'The men will do all the work of moving us. I will trumpet now and then, just to let them know I am here, so that they won't go off and leave my cage behind.'

It seemed as if the other animals had the same idea. For all the Elephants trumpeted loudly, the Camels made a piteous moan, the Lions roared, the Tigers snarled, the Horses neighed, the Dogs barked, until Johnny wondered that the Circus men could keep their wits and move them all so neatly and with such dispatch.

They went by train, though the distance was so short, and when the engine whistled and the bell rang to start, there was not a single cage nor animal nor chariot that was not packed aboard and in its proper place.

When the new Circus grounds were reached, the confusion and noise were greater than before. For

the tent must be set up, the sawdust ring laid, and preparations made for the Grand March around Town that was looked forward to by the Circus folk quite as eagerly as to the Circus itself.

Now it was that Johnny became so excited that he trembled and clattered like a pair of castanets. Even Rajah was unable to stand still in his cage, and swayed to and fro and curled and uncurled his trunk and flapped his mighty ears over and over again.

When the moment came for Rajah to take his place in the line as leader of the twenty-four Elephants, Johnny Ping Wing rode with him, out of sight, on the end of his nicely curled trunk. For that was the way Rajah marched, with his trunk in a curl, while behind him stepped the twenty-three Elephants, each carrying in his trunk the tail of the Elephant ahead.

In front of Rajah, twirling an ankus, a sharp spike which was seldom used, walked the Elephant Trainer, Signor Rondonello. He was a good friend of Rajah. He had brought him from the Jungle many years ago, had trained him, and knew him through and through.

The procession started.

It was headed by the band, dressed in gay red-and-black uniforms which matched the bright red wagon in which they rode. They played their liveliest tunes, scarcely stopping for breath, which quickened every one's steps and put them all in fine marching trim.

Next came three automobiles filled with performers. They were the acrobats and the Fat Lady, the Living Skeleton, and the family of stout Midgets, all dressed in their best, bowing and smiling to the right and to the left, looking so happy it made all who saw them wish that they might belong to a Circus, too.

After them rode the men and women on horseback, ribbons fluttering, feathers flying, horses prancing and stepping high. Never were such pretty pink cheeks, sweet smiles, and splendid bows seen in Town before.

Now the golden chariots rumbled along, driven with ease and grace and matchless dignity. Emerald-Green and Poppy-Red and Silver-White rolled by, a noble sight, the watching crowd agreed.

Then came the cages of the animals, the Lion-Tamer sitting with folded arms in the cage with the growling Lion and Lioness, the Snake-Charmer smiling sweetly from among her encircling, twining Snakes. The Tigers, the Grizzly Bear, the trained Dogs rolled by. Beside the Dogs rode the fat Clown making jokes. The thin Clown sat on the roof of the Tigers' cage, peeping down now and then at the great tawny beasts, of whom he pretended to be dreadfully afraid.

Now followed the line of Camels, rocking and swaying as if through desert sands, while behind them walked Signor Rondonello and Rajah, leading his line as the Master of the Jungle should.

Last of all bumped the great calliope which hooted a dismal tune from hoarse and brazen lungs. This brought up the end of the procession. Surely no one could ask for more.

Now, in all that procession there was no one in quite the state of Johnny Ping Wing. He wanted to laugh, he wanted to cry. He wanted to kick his heels and scream. He thought if he could have one great twirl, he would feel better. But of course at

such a moment he couldn't. So he kept as still as he could, with only his peanuts shaking and his pigtail standing out very straight and stiff.

As Rajah swayed along and Johnny's bright black eyes peered hither and yon, suddenly he spied the Daffodil Shop.

He uttered a shriek that reached Rajah's distant ear.

'The Daffodil Shop!' called Johnny Ping Wing. 'There is the Daffodil Shop and Miss Martha herself! Look! Look! Miss Martha in the window of the Daffodil Shop!'

Clever Rajah needed only a hint. Slowly he swung his great trunk, holding Johnny Ping Wing, to the top of his head, and when he brought it down again, he left Johnny Ping Wing sitting up there, holding on as best he might and feeling as if he were perched on top of the highest mountain in the world.

Miss Martha Pretty was watching the Parade from the window of the Daffodil Shop. She had been dusting the shelves, and in one hand she held a dustcloth, in the other was the pretty Flower Girl whom Johnny liked so well. Miss Martha Pretty

saw Rajah swaying up the street. She watched him raise his trunk to his head. Then Miss Martha's pretty brown eyes grew big and round, and she actually rubbed them as if she couldn't believe what she saw.

For sitting on top of Rajah's head she spied Johnny Ping Wing, the little peanut Chinaman whom she herself had made.

'It can't be! I don't believe it! But of course it is! I couldn't make a mistake!'

In a twinkling Miss Martha had shut and locked the door of her Shop and, without her hat, in her gay green smock, dustcloth in hand, was running as quickly as she could through the crowd on the street.

In the Daffodil Shop there was great commotion and joy. Every one crowded forward to look. The six funny Bird Pepper-Pots tumbled down and picked themselves up and got in one another's way. The Silver Mice Salt-Boxes and the Black Cat Door-Stop quite forgot they had quarreled and pushed forward into the window, side by side, to see. The three White Swans found their long necks

very convenient as they craned from the shelf into the window with perfect ease. But the proudest and happiest of all was the Little Flower Girl.

'I knew he would do it!' she murmured, wishing she could throw her flowers before Rajah and Johnny's feet. 'I knew he would do it and he has!'

And at this every one in the Daffodil Shop broke into a cheer so loud it is a wonder it wasn't heard in the street.

Miss Martha hurried through the crowd, her head in a whirl.

'I will go to Jim's house,' thought she as she ran. 'He has my Chinaman. There can't be two just alike. And the Parade will pass the Mayor's house. Jim's mother told me it would.'

So it was that when Johnny on Rajah's head rode up Jim's street, he saw, standing on the porch of the Mayor's house, not only Jim's mother and grandmother, but Miss Martha Pretty as well. Beside them stood the Mayor, looking very fine in a fancy vest, and dignified, too, as a Mayor should, smiling and bowing to a friend in the crowd every now and

then. On a high chair, holding his mother's hand, stood Jim, and he looked as happy as any little boy can look.

But as Rajah and Johnny Ping Wing neared the house, Miss Martha Pretty caught Jim's mother's arm and gave it a shake. She called out, she pointed. Yes, with her finger Miss Martha Pretty pointed to Johnny Ping Wing. And Jim called out and pointed, too.

'Look! Look!' called Jim, hopping on his one good leg and waving his arms in the air. 'It's Johnny! It's Johnny Ping Wing! I thought he was lost, and here he is! Look, look at Johnny Ping Wing!'

And Jim's mother and grandmother began to laugh and to look as if they couldn't believe their eyes.

Then the Mayor took Jim in his arms and walked down the path to the street. There he sat Jim on the gatepost just as Rajah and Johnny Ping Wing stepped in front of the house.

Now Rajah stood still, stock-still in the street. This was not part of the Parade. No one knew he

was going to do this except Rajah himself, and perhaps Johnny Ping Wing. And because Rajah was the leader of the Elephants, when he stopped, they all stopped, too. All twenty-three Elephants stood still, not one of them moved.

Signor Rondonello looked round in surprise. But, as we have said, he had trained Rajah and knew him through and through. He knew he had some good reason for behaving as he did.

First Rajah gently twitched his tail from the trunk of the Elephant who walked behind.

Then with a flourish he threw his own trunk up in the air until it rested upon the top of his head, just before the stiff form of Johnny Ping Wing, and with his rolling little eye fixed upon Jim, Rajah trumpeted, a great roaring bellow that filled the street from end to end.

'A salute!' cried Signor Rondonello. 'He salutes you!'

And Signor Rondonello himself bowed low before Jim and the Mayor as if he thought they might be a King and a young Prince in disguise.

But Rajah had not finished what he meant to do.

He remembered what Johnny had told him, how Jim wanted to see an elephant lift his feet.

So Rajah lifted his feet one after another and set them down, at first softly and then louder until the stamping could be heard by the band at the head of the Parade.

Then, last of all, Rajah's long gray trunk reached gently out toward Jim. And as Jim did not shrink away, but sat transfixed in wonder and in joy, round Jim's waist went the mighty trunk and up, up through the air rose Jim to be seated firmly on Rajah's broad gray neck. With a little scramble, Jim clutched Rajah with both legs. With one hand he grasped a great fold on Rajah's neck, with the other he caught Johnny Ping Wing.

Then slowly, very slowly, Rajah moved off out of the line and up the street.

Signor Rondonello ran at his side.

'He is gentle, he will do him no harm,' called the Signor, his face filled with amaze. 'Never have I seen the like of this before.'

The thin Clown from the top of the Tigers' cage had seen what had happened. He now ran at

Rajah's other side, so that Jim was safe in case he slipped and fell.

But Jim didn't fall. He hadn't such a thought. He was so happy and proud, he scarcely dared breathe. He smiled a little smile at his mother and grandmother and Miss Martha on the porch. He saw that they looked both frightened and yet pleased. He glanced away quickly for fear his mother would call him to come down.

The Mayor was walking along beside Rajah, too. Jim smiled triumphantly down at him. He was a man and would know just how Jim felt about it all.

Jim wished he could ride on forever. He forgot the Circus and the Parade and the staring crowd. He did not even wonder how Johnny Ping Wing had come there. He only knew that he was riding upon an elephant, a real live elephant, just what he meant to do when he grew up and was a great hunter in the Jungle across the sea.

Rajah swayed up the street to the corner. There he had barely room to turn around. Then back he came to the Mayor's house and would have set Jim safely upon the gatepost if Signor Rondonello

and the Mayor had not lifted the little boy gently down.

'Pat his trunk and say "Thank you,"' said the Mayor, holding Jim in his arms.

In a daze Jim patted the rough wrinkled trunk and looked into Rajah's little rolling eye, in which there twinkled a spark of mischief for any one who had eyes to see.

Jim couldn't speak. But Rajah understood. He knew that he had made Jim happy. And that was what Rajah wanted. So he ambled back to his place in the line and stood waiting patiently for the Parade to start, just as if he were not the one who had caused the halt.

'A fine elephant,' Signor Rondonello was saying, 'as wise as a man. He would not hurt a fly. Evidently there is a bond between him and your little son. Has he ever traveled in India, your son, may I ask?'

'No, never,' answered the Mayor, with a smile. 'But he is going to the Circus this afternoon, he and I and those three ladies whom you see on the porch.'

'Honored! Honored!' murmured Signor Rondonello, bowing to the ladies and to the Mayor and Jim, too.

Then with a flourish of his ankus, Signor Rondonello started the line of elephants and off they rocked out of sight, followed by the hooting calliope which was the very end of the Parade.

On the porch Jim's mother took Jim in her arms and held him close. She was glad to have him safe once more after that amazing ride up the street and back again. Grandma patted Jim's head as if he had done something very brave. The Mayor smiled and walked up and down the porch, wishing no doubt that he had had a ride on an elephant, too.

But Miss Martha was the first to speak.

'Jim,' said Miss Martha Pretty, looking from Jim to Johnny Ping Wing, whom he still clutched in his hand, 'how in the world do you think that elephant got hold of our Johnny Ping Wing?'

Jim shook his head. Truly he didn't know, but he took a firmer hold on Johnny as if he didn't mean to lose him again.

'I'll ask him,' said Jim, holding out Johnny by

the cord in his hat. 'Johnny, where were you? Where have you been? Tell us how you met the elephant, Johnny, do.'

But never a word said Johnny Ping Wing. He only smiled and whirled and twirled.

Back on his nail in the window, with Jim down at luncheon, Johnny Ping Wing hung and swung and smiled in great content.

'I did what I said I would,' said Johnny. 'No elephant ate me, and I wasn't afraid.'

He thought of Jim, flushed and smiling, as he rode up and down the street.

'I am glad I did it. Jim was worth it all,' said Johnny Ping Wing.

Then he caught sight of a gray flannel trunk and two shoe-button eyes peeping round the play-room door.

'Hello, there!' called Johnny to the Gray Flannel Elephant. 'I will see you this afternoon when we are alone and tell you all about it. Were you looking out of the window this morning? Did you see the real live elephant in front of the house?'

The Gray Flannel Elephant nodded, and over his shoulder Johnny caught sight of the long nose of the dapple-gray Rocking-Horse peering into the room.

'See you later!' called Johnny Ping Wing. 'I have had a fine time and I should like to do it all over again for Jim.'

THE END

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